

An Exploration of the American College Golf System: A Developmental Pathway for International Student- Athletes



A thesis submitted for the degree of Masters by Research

by

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Declaration

Candidate's declarations:

I, Fraser Hutchison, hereby certify that this thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Masters by Research, Abertay University, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This work has not been submitted for any other qualification at any other academic institution.

Signed

Date 27th April 2017

Supervisor's declaration:

I, Ross Lorimer hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Masters by Research in Abertay University and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Signed

Date 27th April 2017

Certificate of Approval

I certify that this is a true and accurate version of the thesis approved by the examiners, and that all relevant ordinance regulations have been fulfilled.

Supervisor.....

Date.....

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Abstract

The American College Sports system is as complex as it is unique and offers lucrative opportunities for international student-athletes by way of sports scholarships. This study set out to provide a critical overview of the United States (US) college golf system, to explore the experiences of student-athletes within the system and to critically analyse the transitions encountered. To investigate first hand perspectives of the US college golf system, face-to-face interviews were conducted utilising semi-structured interviews. The sample group was made up of five males and four females. Eight British and one Spanish student-athlete were interviewed at their home golf clubs. This allowed exploration of non-quantifiable qualities such as attitudes, feelings, thoughts and experiences, aspects which qualitative research aims to highlight (Gratton & Jones 2010). Inclusion was on the basis of being a student-athlete that had completed at least their first year (freshman year) while on a golf scholarship. Additionally, each participant was attending (or had attended) a different institution from across the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1 and 2 level and also the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division 1 and 2 level.

Findings from the study align with Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) transition theory and Ryan and Deci (2000) self-determination theory (SDT) and highlight the challenges facing international student-athletes. Moreover, results outline that transitioning from the United Kingdom (UK) into the US college golf system (post compulsory education) is far from straightforward, as student-athletes experience a series of normative and non-normative transitions. While these experiences during the initial months of the freshman year have the capacity to impact negatively on progression (such as homesickness), it was found that the US college golf system creates a community and environment that positively impacts on the student-athletes development over time, thus equipping them with strong life skills, as well as with the tools to positively overcome challenging transitions in the months and years thereafter.

Key words: **Student-athlete, Recruitment, Scholarships, NCAA, NJCAA, Grade Point Average, Transitions, SDT**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Research Question

In tackling this study, the paper will discuss some of the leading research in the field of intercollegiate sports in the US. Further, from empirical research carried out with a number of past and current student-athletes, it will attempt to tell the story of their journey into the game of golf, through the teenage years, through to transitioning into and the experience of being a student-athlete. The term given to this kind of research is that of a narrative inquiry, focused on trying to understand experience. As Clandinin & Connelly (2000) set out to gain an understanding of an individual's life experience, this story of the intercollegiate sports system sets out to try and gain an understanding of the journey of young student-athletes lives' on a continuum. Notably, student-athletes from the United Kingdom (UK) who progressed to Colleges and Universities across America on golf scholarships, post compulsory education.

1.2 Outline of the Study

It is the aim of this study to:

1. Overview the US College Golf System
2. Detail the experience of UK student-athletes in America
3. Critically analyse the transitions and change-events encountered and how they were overcome

This study chose to research students who gain golf scholarships to the USA and examine their characteristics in regards to their transition to becoming a student-athlete. Additionally, it is posited that their development during the student-athlete years in the US, and the system

within which they are exposed, positively affects academic and athletic performance, as well as the ability to overcome a multitude of challenges along the way.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a critical evaluation of the key literature focused on student-athletes and their development academically, athletically and socially while in the US College sports system. Insight into the multi-dimensional factors affecting student-athletes will be examined, along with relevant theoretical background in the field.

This study set out to explore the journey of nine student-athletes who subsequently gained golf scholarships, post compulsory education in the UK, to nine separate colleges and universities across America. It is important to note that in the US, 'college' and 'school' are used interchangeably with 'university'. 'College' always refers to higher education, (Plyler 2017).

2.2 Why Engage in US Scholarships?

For many international students, the dilemma of what pathway to take after high school can be a complex one. Opportunities to balance sport and academics for talented young performers are limited in countries where the realms of academia and athletics are separate (KWHS 2016). The answer to this anxiety can point towards the American Intercollegiate Sports System.

Countries outside of the US are intrigued by America's unique model of collegiate sports (Homeland Security 2011). From a UK perspective, with the introduction of tuition fees at institutions in England, mainstream students are now looking at opportunities to study abroad. This is no different for students who have a particular talent in a sport where gaining a sports scholarship to America can make the financial transition more affordable. Where tuition fees can easily reach the tens of thousands of dollars annually in American institutions, depending on the athletic ability of the student-athlete, a scholarship offer can cover the majority of costs in some cases. Where there is a scholarship offer lower than 100% (which is the majority of the time), the shortfall must be made up by the individual or their family.

In a recent article in the Sunday Telegraph (2017), the topic of why some UK students are choosing America is discussed. The prestige, flexibility and potential scholarship offers are now making the possibility of furthering academics and sports in America a viable alternative to that of more traditional options at home. The article highlights that there has been a 31% increase in British students applying to US Colleges in the past four years. Coupled with the lure of well organised intercollegiate sports, the flexible nature of American undergraduate programmes allows students to change degree pathways during the early years of study. One student expressed that 'having the opportunity to change your major as you go and try things you never would have otherwise tried is incredible' (Sunday Telegraph 2017). Having to make such milestone decisions as what to study and what to do with one's life after high school, at 18 years of age is a tall order. The US system allows for this, giving greater flexibility for students to change their academic pathway as they grow and develop during the early stages of their undergraduate career (Plyler 2017).

2.3 Recruitment Processes

A process which can be completely alien to many international student-athletes is that of college recruiting in the US. What it entails, who to make contact with and where to start are common apprehensions (KWHS 2016). Most college coaches also recruit two years in advance and in some cases, student-athletes as young as 14 and 15 can be verbally offered a scholarship and commit to a college while still in high school (Koehler 1996). Coupled with this dynamic, is the additional challenge of finding the right college which best fits the student-athlete from an academic and golf standpoint.

According to recent NCAA statistics, there are around 480,000 student-athletes that participate in college athletics each year (ncaa 2017). From this number, some 17,000 are international. Further, recent statistics from Fulbright (2017) indicates that 11,600 students from the UK are currently enrolled at institutions across America. However, knowing where to start and where to find the right opportunity is a challenge.

Only about 2% of high school athletes win sports scholarships to an NCAA institution (ncaa 2017). As Ryan and Acosta (2017) outline, there are in fact far fewer opportunities in Division 1 golf than people realise, especially for men. Most prospective international student-athletes are lured by the high profile Division 1 programmes, however the reality of understanding how good a player needs to be to compete at that level is not always known by players and their families. Additionally, there are while there are 298 Division 1 schools which have men's programmes, most of which will only take two players per recruiting class meaning there are only 596 Men's Division 1 roster spots available each year. Factor in the international student-athlete prospects each year along with 150,000 juniors in America, and the chances of securing one of these spots are far more difficult than most people realise (Ryan and Acosta 2017). Golfstats (2017) data compliments this research by showing that

of the 67 players who signed with the top 25 Division 1 schools, there were no international student-athletes from the UK (for the 2015/2016 year). The schools ranked from 26-100 in Division 1 showed 26 international recruits, with two coming from Scotland and four from England (Golfstats 2017). Across the three Divisions, the breakdown of Men's and Women's golf programmes are as follows:

1. **Division 1:** 298 Men's and 264 Women's programmes
 2. **Division 2:** 224 Men's and 166 Women's programmes
 3. **Division 3:** 286 Men's and 136 Women's programmes
- (ncaa 2017)

The key difference between the three divisions is that Institutions at Division 1 and 2 offer athletic scholarships, whereas Division 3 do not.

For student-athletes who are perhaps not quite ready academically, athletically and socially for the transition to a university in the divisions set out above, two-year colleges (also known as community colleges) are a good option. Governed by the NJCAA, student-athletes who perform well at Junior College level can be recruited by coaches at NCAA divisions and transfer into their Junior Year (3rd year), provided they graduate with the requisite credits (NJCAA 2017).

There are a number of ways to get noticed as an international student-athlete. For the student-athlete with a high World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR), quite often coaches will recruit them directly, making the process much easier. Coaches and their assistants have allocated budgets (particularly at Division 1 level) to travel and watch young performers competing in national golf events around the globe. Indeed, some college golf programmes are in fact dominated by international talent with some teams made up entirely of foreign student-athletes (Wilson 2008). However, with the spread of American college golf also covering Division 2, 3 and Junior Colleges, the majority of student-athletes are not fortunate enough to be recruited this way. Most colleges

have international student-athlete applications found online (Khoeler 1996) which are open for any international to complete. The difficulty being however, that some institutions can be inundated, meaning some applications may not always be acknowledged.

Emailing coaches directly is another option via college websites, the challenge being writing an email and submitting the correct documents that a coach would want to see. In essence, it's similar to applying for a job (Plyler 2017). If a coach does not like what they read or see, contact by reply is unlikely. Utilising the assistance of an individual who has experience of the system, such as a consultant or golf coach, can be the most effective way of learning more about college golf (Koehler 1996). Further, through relationships they already have with US coaches, they can introduce young prospects and families to coaches and advise throughout the recruitment process. Moreover, golf coaches with prior experience of the US system and consultants can not only help support student-athletes and their families through the process, but also coaches at institutions in the US who do not have recruitment budgets to travel and watch junior tournaments internationally.

2.4 Processes for Student-Athletes and their Families

For international student-athletes hoping to gain a golf scholarship to an NCAA institution, registering online with the NCAA Eligibility Centre is the first step (ncaa 2017). This process involves two key aspects:

1. Detailing educational history
2. Detailing student sports participation history

The NCAA then assesses the candidates details and assuming they meet the required criteria, clears the student-athlete for athletic competition. From the day a student-athlete finishes high school, their 'eligibility' clock starts ticking. What this means is they have five years from that point within which to complete four seasons of competition (ncaa 2017). The clock continues to tick even if the student-athlete takes a gap year post high school prior to starting college. For international students and their families, it is important to be aware of this prior to their son/daughter completing high school. As Lally and Kerr (2005) outline, the life-cycle of the whole process needs to start early. Since US college golf coaches recruit players up to at least two years in advance, this means that families out with the US need to be ready and active during the student-athletes fourth year of high school (in Scotland). In England and Wales, this would be during Year 11 and Year 12 in Northern Ireland. Starting the process during these periods gives the young performer enough time and the best possible chance of attracting an athletic scholarship.

2.5 Academic Requirements and Eligibility

Institutions at Division 1 level set the required Grade Point Average (GPA) for their student-athletes for each semester of study, (Smith 2000). As table 3 below illustrates, a 2.0 GPA represents a C grade and satisfactory pass with a 4.0 equating to an 'excellent' A pass. In some institutions the Athletic Director can set the minimum slightly higher,

however in no circumstances can it be set any lower. For Division 2 institutions, the minimum GPA requirement in some cases is lower than their Division 1 counterparts (Franklin 2006). In regards to grades and academic eligibility for athletic teams at UK institutions, no evidence was found to suggest an equivalent system exists.

In research carried out by the Centre for the Study of Athletics, covering forty-two Division 1 Colleges, it was found that a high majority (44%) of athletes in the profit making sports (American Football) expected to become professional athletes (Hyatt 2003). The reality however, is quite different with only around 2.3% to 2.5% of athletes being drafted into the National Football League (NFL) and National Basketball Association (NBA) respectively. Additionally, the study highlighted that these student-athletes focus was not on gaining a College degree. In contrast, another study went on to outline that athletes in the 'non' profit making sports 'clear goal was to graduate with a degree and looked at their athletic scholarship as a medium to earn scholarship to gain an education,' (Simiyu 2010)

In a study carried out by Routon and Walker (2015), they estimate the impact of intercollegiate sports participation on academic outcomes. They analysed data from a longitudinal survey of student-athletes at over 400 institutions. Their findings are congruent with similar research in this field, concluding that high profile, 'marque' sport student-athletes are those most affected negatively by participation in college sports. Additionally, this group entered college with lower academic skills compared to the wider student-athlete population.

It is important to mention at this stage that although a student-athlete may be awarded a sports scholarships for their ability on the field of play, they must also meet the academic entrance requirements of the respective institution. Academic suitability is assessed through the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). This assessment is the only mechanism which institutions governed by the NCAA can use, to assess the academic level

of student athletes from all over the world. Once the candidate fulfils academic as well as playing performance criteria, they are sent a National Letter of Intent (see appendix 7.4). This is a contract between the athletic department of the institution and the candidate, stipulating the amount of scholarship being offered and what it covers.

Table 1 Explanation of Grades and GPA

Source: www.bu.edu

Letter Grade	Honor Points	Explanation
A	4.0	Excellent
A-	3.7	Excellent
B+	3.3	Excellent
B	3.0	Good
B-	2.7	Good
C+	2.3	Good
C	2.0	Satisfactory
C-	1.7	Satisfactory
D	1.0	Low, pass
F	0.0	Fail, no credit

College sports and education run in parallel in the USA. If student-athletes perform in the classroom they are rewarded with maximum opportunity to train and to qualify for their respective team. Thelin (1996) highlights that those who do not appreciate the educational value of athletics find it a peculiar institution within the context of American Higher Education.

His view was very similar to that of Simon (2008) who states that academic values and athletic ones can be mutually reinforcing and hence intercollegiate athletics should be utilised to teach fundamental human values rather than disparaged.

While an international student-athlete can attract a very good golf scholarship offer based on their golfing resume alone, admission to the institution will not be granted unless they can also demonstrate certain academic standards. Four year institutions 'will want to see post-16 attainment' (Plyler 2017), which typically includes two/three A Levels and the equivalent in Scottish Highers. The requisite academic level varies from institution to institution, so researching average SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) scores and academic programmes of institutions is as important as their golf programmes.

Known as the SAT, the Scholastic Aptitude Test is a reading/writing and mathematics test (Collegeboard 2017), which international student-athletes need to undertake depending on the institutions they are applying to. The SAT enables American institutions to gauge a candidate's academic level no matter their country of origin. It is also available to sit in most countries around the world at selected institutions (Collegeboard 2017). It is out of a maximum of 1600 points and as table 1 and 2 below outline, the average score required varies across institutions and Divisions:

Table 2 Average SAT Scores of Selected Division 1 Institutions

Institution	Division	Average SAT Score
Harvard	1	1500
University of California Los Angeles	1	1310
Florida State University	1	1190
University of Louisville	1	1110
Virginia Commonwealth University	1	1105
University of New Mexico	1	1105
Texas State University	1	1030

(American College Golf Guide 2017)

Table 3 Average SAT Scores of Selected Division 2 Institutions

Institution	Division	Average SAT Score
Florida Tech	2	1135
Lenoir Rhyne University	2	985
University of South Carolina-Aiken	2	965
Newberry College	2	940
Barry University	2	925
Albany State University	2	895
Western New Mexico University	2	855

(American College Golf Guide 2017)

The average SAT scores outlined above only represents a snapshot of selected institutions from Division 1 and Division 2. Candidates can also sit the SAT multiple times to improve their overall score or a certain aspect of it (Collegeboard 2017). Student-athletes starting at Junior College (JC) level are not always required to take the SAT, as entrance to Division 1 and Division 2 JC's is dependent on high school results alone. Graduates from JC are eligible to progress to NCAA institutions (in some cases they are recruited by NCAA golf coaches) and provided their academic credits transfer, can progress into their Junior Year (3rd year) at University. Further, this pathway can be equally as rewarding especially if a student-athlete has a young biological age, needs additional maturity time academically/athletically and if there have been no offers from larger NCAA institutions (Ryan and Acosta 2017). Additionally, the JC route is also a good option as a financial alternative for families, as costs are typically less than \$15,000 all in.

While successful sports programmes across American colleges help with profiling and positioning in conference leagues and rankings, the primary goal of each coach and college is to graduate their student-athletes (Brand 2001). Indeed, college sports teams can win academic awards for

the highest average GPA institutionally but also across schools regionally and nationally. The Graduation Success Rates (GSRs) for college sports are available through the NCAA and according to their recent research, the GSR for Division 1 Men's Golf was 84% and for Ladies Golf 91% (ncaa 2017). In comparison, the GSR for Men's Football and Basketball (the main revenue making sports) was 71% and 72%. Further, the highest GSR across all sports was that of Ladies Field Hockey with a GSR of 95% (ncaa 2017). Compared to the general student graduation success rate of 63% it is apparent that research by NCES (2017) supports Aries (2004) who highlighted that due to the mutually reinforcing nature of college athletics and academics, student-athletes graduate at a higher rate to that of their mainstream counterparts. However, as outlined by Rishe (2003), this comparison should be taken with some caution as the metric used to analyse GSR's between student-athletes and main stream students is different. In regards to drop-out from scholarship programmes, sport by sport data is unclear. According to Branch (2011), 30% of US student-athletes do not complete and drop-out. However, this should be quantified by outlining that this figure is largely consumed by student-athletes on scholarship in Men's Football and Basketball therefore not representative across all other college sports programmes.

2.6 Financial Implications

The prospect of taking up a US sports scholarship can not only be a daunting one for student-athletes, but also a significant financial consideration for their families. From a UK perspective, culturally families are not as familiar with the sizable college funds required by their US counterparts (Plyler 2017). In the USA, private institutions make up 75% of all colleges/universities. As Plyler (2017) outlines, funding for these schools derives via a combination of fees, grants, endowments and donations from alumni. The remaining 25% of colleges/universities are state institutions which are founded by state governments to provide a

less expensive higher education to residents of their state. For example, if a resident of North Carolina attends North Carolina State University, their fees will be considerably less than those of anyone from out of state. Unfortunately this incentive for US citizens does not extend to international student-athletes, however sport scholarships do still exist at State and Private institutions alike.

While students in Scotland (and European Union countries) are eligible to receive funding for tuition fees (SAAS 2017), when considering a move to the US, unless on a sports scholarship, they would be liable for 100% of the tuition fees. At NCAA Division 1 and Division 2 level, this can be in the region of \$30,000 per annum including tuition fees, room/board and books (Medic 2007). Add to this, the cost for flights, annual insurance and spending money, the total cost can easily reach six figures over four years. That said, a sports scholarship can make these figures more attainable. Sanderson and Siegfried (2015) make the point when highlighting the college sports scholarship system in the US is unique as young student-athletes from all over the world have the opportunity to win a scholarship, compete at a high athletic level while furthering their education in parallel.

In August 2015 an additional financial contribution for student-athletes on sports scholarships was made available through many Division 1 institutions. The 'stipend' was brought about to help bridge the gap between scholarships and what they covered (tuition fees, books, board) to that of total living costs (The Daily Universe 2016). In essence, the stipend is a cost of living allowance which is an additional payment to student-athletes which can be used for day to day expenses. There is no formula for the amount of stipend awarded, however they tend to be in the region of \$3,500 to \$4,500 per annum depending on the institution (The Daily Universe 2016).

This new additional payment (on top of an athletic scholarship) has had its supporters and its critics. From a parental viewpoint, it is a win win! The stipend helps significantly with living expenses, flights, spending money which would typically be funded by families even when their son or daughter is on a sports scholarship. As The Daily Universe (2016) highlights, student-athletes spend around 40 hours per week on academics and at least 45 hours per week on their sports making it a full-time job. Thus, the stipend negates the need for the student-athlete to find time for a job on top of this already full-time schedule. Additionally, with some college coaches on salaries in the region of \$6,000,000 annually, it is argued that institutions, coaches and the NCAA alike are significantly benefiting financially from their student-athletes. The stipend therefore goes someway as payback for the performance of the student-athletes (Smith 2012).

However, critics argue against this additional payment stating that student-athletes are already receiving a free education in many cases, (Shulman and Bowen 2011). Moreover, the playing field is not level in terms of all institutions being able to offer this payment, also resulting in an unfair advantage in attracting recruits. In real terms, only those 'power' schools in the biggest conferences can afford these payments while other institutions on tighter budgets need to find other mechanisms to try to compete (Simon 2008). Further, as there were no student-athletes from the UK recruited to these top 'power' schools (top 25 Division 1) in 2015-2016, the reality is that stipends are offered to a relative minority. Further down the Division 1 rankings, stipends are seldom available and at Division 2 level with tighter budgets, additional payments are not feasible.

Preferential treatment and exemptions given to student-athletes meant that Bowen and Levin (2011) dismissed athletes being considered as 'academics'. Conversely, Umbach et. al (2005) argue that student-athletes are 'above average' compared to the normal student population. Indeed, his research discovered that student-athletes found their

institutions to be more supportive of their academic and social needs, as well as their athletic development.

Moreover, Franklin (2006) research found that student-athletes actually graduate at higher rates than the general student body. His research covered some 294,000 student-athletes across all demographic groups in Division 1 and Division 2 NCAA institutions. The research found all but one group of student-athletes graduated on average two percentage points higher than that of the general student population. These are very significant findings given the sample size and cross section of all student-athletes accessed across all colleges in the respective divisions, and with all 24-college sports covered. This is an opinion shared by Hyland (2008) who found that the educational powers of athletics meant that academics and sports were mutually reinforcing.

Depending on the sport played, student-athletes can be categorised into two groups. Those who compete in revenue making sports eg., men's basketball and men's football (American football) and those competing in non-revenue making sports (most every other college sport in comparison). It is therefore prudent not to generalise findings from one group to necessarily be reflective of the whole student-athlete population (Simons et. al 1999).

2.7 21st Century Intercollegiate Sports

The College sports system in the USA is quite unlike anything else in the world. As Simon (2008) discusses, many aspiring young performers' ultimate goal is to gain a sports scholarship to the USA to embark on the journey of furthering academic and sporting performance, by way of a stepping-stone to the ultimate goal of a professional career in their sport thereafter. It would be a safe assumption to speculate that the majority of student-athletes on golf scholarships are no different, however the reality is only around 1%-2% make it to the professional ranks (Smith 2012).

Additionally, Franklin (2006) highlights that college athletics should be seen as a model for promoting academic achievement since athletes graduate at a higher percentage to non-athletes. However, other researchers find more negative consequences for student-athletes particularly evident in the more high profile (revenue making sports) of college basketball and football. Research by Shulman and Bowen (2001) focussed on one Division 1 university and found student-athletes (particularly basketball and football) generally performed below that of non-athletes in regards to academic achievement and graduation rates. However, this is a selective finding as the data derives from one institution, covers only the two main revenue making sports and can therefore not be taken as representative of all college sports and athletes.

Aries et. al (2004) found the opposite to be true. Their longitudinal study followed student-athletes over a 4 year period at two institutions, one of which was an Ivy League university. It was found that athletes who spent over 10 hours per week in athletic activities had lower entering academic credentials than their non-athletic counterparts. However, academic performance thereafter was found not to be commensurate to that of their entrance level. Furthermore, athletes surpassed non-athletes in areas of well-being, sociability and extraversion. Perhaps most interestingly in this study, it revealed that student-athletes spent over 50% of their time with non-athlete groups, a component of Astin (1984) research who reported the opposite with a lack of social development of student-athletes given their lack of interaction with peers out with their athletic group. Again, Aries et. al (2004) should be read with a little caution. While data was gathered over a longer period, only student-athletes at two institutions were sampled. Moreover, one institution was an Ivy League university (very selective academic admission), these institutions are the minority across the intercollegiate sports landscape and therefore do not represent the US college sports system across the wider domain.

With the vast sums of revenue associated with many athletic programmes across the USA come many rules and procedures, enforced by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

2.8 The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

Previously known as the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the US (IAAUS), the NCAA as it is known today, formed in 1910. By 1973 the current set up of Division 1, Division 2 and Division 3 was adopted by the NCAA (ncaa 2016) mainly due to the rapid growth of intercollegiate sports across all institutions (College sports also refers to University level in the USA). The Athletic Departments of big time Division 1 programmes now mirror that of the business world, with athletic directors referred to as Chief Financial Officers (Smith 2012). Division 1 athletic programmes are typically in the largest institutions which can command and attract multi-million dollar sponsorship deals, especially for the biggest revenue making sports of Men's College Basketball and Football (American Football). As outlined by Ryan (1989), athletic scholarships are also offered at Division 2 level, however no athletic scholarships are offered at Division 3.

However, with the growth of intercollegiate sports across all Divisions, this in turn has also brought the NCAA as the governing organisation into the public eye, Acain (1997). Perhaps similarly with the world football organisation FIFA being investigated for cases of fraud and bribery in recent times, similar cases have come about at NCAA Division 1 universities. Case in point, the University of Minnesota (UMN). According to research by Wells and Carozza (2000), between 1993 and 1998, more than 400 assignments were written for the men's basketball team at UMN, along with the head coach making cash payments to players. Additionally, it was found that he instructed his team to lie to lawyers who were investigating academic fraud. This is an extreme case and has led to continual refinement of rules and compliance within the

NCAA, and the compliance departments within athletic departments of each member institution. It also illustrates the lengths some coaches and institutions have gone to ensure high profile student-athletes, of big time sports programmes, remain academically eligible to compete.

Indeed, perhaps as a result of previous litigious cases such as that of UMN, there are misconceptions of the US College Sports system being likened to a country club style of sport and education (Purdy et. al 1982). Simons (1999) asks the question; does athletics undermine academics? Clearly previous cases like UMN would suggest so, however there is also research to the contrary. Student-athletes can make the best employees according to Dodds (2015). In their research, sampling graduate alumni who were previously student-athletes across a variety of college sports, they were asked what the top three qualities would be that are attractive in the eyes of the employer. Several common themes resulted from focus group discussion, namely:

1. Teamwork
2. Leadership
3. Communication
4. Time management

The focus group analysed many facets surrounding the four points above and went on to detail:

Time management is not just completing three assignments in one day.. To a student-athlete, time management is studying for mid-terms/finals and completing assignments while on the bus home after a heart-breaking loss, when your mind and body just wants to shut off...

Being part of a team is also completely transferrable into the work place, something student-athletes have years of experience of. 'The support we all relentlessly and without fail provide for our teammates' was another strong example, from Dodds (2015) research, that set student-athletes above their competition in the world of work.

Further, perhaps most notable in Dodds (2015) study, was the conclusion that accepted these characteristics can of course be learned elsewhere, but the 'intensity and time frame at which student-athletes have worked to learn and perfect them cannot be surpassed.' Moreover, the findings outlined:

'The high-stake, high-emotion, fast-paced, competitive and often stressful environment in which student-athletes have honed these skills is notably what will set them above the rest in work scenarios.'

Some caution should be taken when reading the findings from Dodds (2015) study. The sample of student-athletes used is based from one University, all of whom are Alumni members of the institution. The study does not provide details of the sports covered by the members sampled, nor the male to female ratio. Nevertheless, the findings are relevant and add some value to the wider research supporting the notion that being a student-athlete has more developmental benefits beyond purely the years at College.

2.9 Scholarships

While the NCAA establishes the number of scholarships allocated per athletic team, it is up to the respective institutions which sports they choose to offer scholarships in. The funding for scholarships comes from a combination of revenue generated by the Athletic Department and NCAA distributions (NCAA 2017). Some \$6.1 billion is generated from College Athletics programmes with a further \$5.3 billion considered 'allocated revenue' coming from student fees allocated to athletics, direct and indirect institutional support along with government support (NCAA 2017). The vast majority of revenue is generated through gate receipts at home basketball and football games. With several top Division 1 college football stadiums seating in excess of 100,000 people, coupled with the student-athletes on the field of play being amateurs, all revenue is retained by the respective athletic department. Moreover, several university football stadiums have been used to host the Superbowl, illustrating the size and scale of some college facilities. As Murray (2000) outlines, much of this revenue is then reinvested across the athletic teams.

Research by Medic et al. (2007) analysed data on the effects of athletic scholarships on motivation in sport. A sample of 70 non-scholarship and 46 scholarship basketball players was used in an attempt to identify differences in motivation that the effects of being on a scholarship may have. Results highlighted that scholarship athletes were extrinsically motivated by fame, recognition and the prospect of being drafted into the National Basketball Association (NBA). Further, results showed lower levels of intrinsic motivation for academic outcomes. Interestingly, when the non-athletes were faced with the hypothetical scenario of gaining a scholarship, they demonstrated decreasing intrinsic motivation for the accomplishment of academic tasks. While these findings are representative of the basketball student-athletes, they cannot be said to reflect student-athletes who study and compete in the non-revenue

making sports such as golf. Additionally, the sample was taken from one university only.

One such regulation is that a Men's Golf Coach (at Division 1 University level) has a maximum 4 ½ full golf scholarships for his team. Conversely, the Ladies Golf Coach has 6 full golf scholarships to divide amongst their team. It is then up to the coach and their staff to allocate a percentage of this scholarship money to new recruits based on the perceived ability of the student-athlete. Although this appears to highlight an imbalance between men's and women's golf scholarships, Title IX adopted by the NCAA after it became federal law in 1972, was implemented to ensure more of a balance between genders in college athletics. Further, with a high proportion of men's football and basketball absorbing scholarship funds, women's golf is one sport which is provided with more scholarship money to address the imbalance. However, as Fletcher et al. (2003) outlines women in college sports still face challenges such as fewer scholarships, less media exposure and societal bias. As Murray (2000) outlines, such is the nature of Intercollegiate Athletics in the USA, that coaches' jobs are dependent on results. Coaching salaries reflect this with the most successful revenue making team coaches (men's football and basketball) quite often on salaries in the region of \$6,000,000 +, a parallel that can be drawn to that of top Premiership Football Managers in the UK. Thus recruiting the best possible players is high on all US coaches' agendas on an annual basis.

2.10 Student Athlete: Early Specialisation vs Multi Sports

As shown in Cote et al 2007 (pg 197) figure 2 below, there are several developmental pathways for young people participating in sport. These pathways are:

1. Recreational Participation through sampling
2. Elite Performance through sampling
3. Elite Performance through early specialisation

Cotes model was developed using data from Canadian and Australian athletes mainly in team sports, however this can be used to help illustrate commonalities across the golfers in the university golf team. For the purpose of this, stage one will not be reviewed, as stage 2 and 3 will be discussed in relation to the player profiles of the team and the participants sampled later in the paper.



Figure 1 The Developmental Model of Sport Participation

(Côté et al., 2007, p.197)

The second stage of elite performance through sampling involves:

- Playing numerous sports through the ages of 6-11 years old
- High volumes of deliberate play

At this stage, rules could be adapted to accommodate all skill levels, thus providing enjoyment and engagement in the sport, something Bloom (1985) outlines as imperative for keeping children engaged. During the ages of 12 - 15, Cote (2007) labelled as the 'Specializing Years,' this is a time where deliberate play matches deliberate practice and the young athlete chooses to reduce the number of sports they are involved in.

Moving to the 'Investment Years' (15-18 years old) activities in Cotes (2007) model include:

- Focus on one sport only
- High amount of deliberate practice
- Lower amount of deliberate play
- Commitment on becoming an 'expert' performer

At this stage there is often a total commitment from parents and coaches, hopefully driven by the athlete themselves, in more deliberate preparation practice and competition in trying to reach the 'elite' performance level. It should be noted between the specialising years and investment years, performers could well drop out and become a recreational player. As stated by Cote et. al (2009), a recreational player is one participating in the sport without the goal of becoming an elite or expert performer, thus not continuing to the investment years. It is often what happens during these 'investment' years that can then determine opportunities in progressing to the US on a scholarship. Wider travel, competing, experience and possibly winning strong field events is ideally what college coaches are looking for. A young player who can step up to the next level after proving himself at all previous levels is the goal, and often where scholarships are offered.

2.11 Who are Student-Athletes?

With much talk of the commercialisation of the college sports world, the professional structure in which it is organised, the variety of resources and support mechanisms at student athlete's disposal, research has also suggested that perhaps college athletics is not setting up student-athletes for the real world post-graduation. The current Athletic Director of East Tennessee State University (ETSU), Dr Richard Sander, published an article (CollegeAD 2016) airing his concerns regarding this matter. For Sander;

"Having a great experience" means being given the opportunity to succeed in the athletics arena, in the classroom and in their social life, while at the same time learning important life lessons that will serve them well after they finish their college years.

This is certainly an area worth mentioning as post-graduation when there are no coaches or administrators taking care of the needs and wants of student athletes, are they being set up for a real world awakening?

After several decades of Athletic Director roles at multiple Division 1 institutions across America, Sander is perhaps well placed to question the current position of college athletics and its role in developing not just high performing athletes who may step into the professional arena, but also employable individuals in an ever more competitive job market. This will be an area explored further during the analysis and discussion of the primary research findings later in this paper.

On the theme of student-athletes development, Yopyk and Prentice (2005) postulate that the opposite may be true. Moreover, with interactions between students from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds from all over the world, this can have a positive effect in terms of respecting diversity and thus encouraging a greater level of critical thinking. Administrators working in counselling and student athletic advisory roles must recognise the challenges facing student athletes in the 21st Century, these being academic, athletic and personal (Howard-Hamilton & Sina 1993). According to Ferrante & Etzel (1996), the failure to maintain balance amongst these three areas may result in personal dissatisfaction, increased stress, psychological problems and even athletic ineligibility.

A recent study by Banwell and Kerr (2016) set out to gain an understanding of University Coaches perspectives on the personal development of their student-athletes through University sport. This study adopted a qualitative approach analysing data gathered via

interviews with eight Coaches. While aspects such as 'Athletes Academic Success', 'Self-Acceptance', 'Learning Life Skills' and 'Mentoring' and 'Reflection' came out as the key themes of the study, the authors found that the sample group of Coaches struggled to articulate their role in the student athletes personal development. Moreover, the Coaches instead referred to academic performance and life skills development and made little or no mention of how their sport aided their development. A limitation of this study is the generalisation of the findings while also not being exclusive to any one college sport in particular. As Gould and Carson (2008) outlined, life skills are defined as internal personal assets, characteristics, and skills such as self-esteem and hard work ethic that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use outside of a sport setting.

From the UK perspective, progression onto College and University courses is done through Universities and Colleges Admission Services (UCAS). High School grades and achievements are the primary qualifications which dictate Conditional and Unconditional offers made to students. Although funding can be applied for through bursaries and respective awards agencies to support study, there is little in the way of specific sports scholarships comparable to that of the USA, (Astin 1993). Moreover, Hyland (2008) highlighted that student athletes in the USA were exposed to and had free access to world class facilities at their disposal.

2.12 Student-Athletes & Code of Conduct

Being a Student-Athlete in the USA is taken seriously and considered a privilege (Smith 2000). Although candidates are aware that they are a student first and athlete second, the US system appears to be successful in instilling a culture of 'student' and 'athlete' being of relative equal importance, and that success in the classroom offers opportunities to train, practice and travel on the College Golf Team or athletic arena.

During the early stages of the Freshman Year, student-athletes are required to read and understand their institutions 'Student-Athlete Code of Conduct', (see appendix 1). This is a document which outlines both academic as well as athletic expectations for the duration of the student-athletes scholarship, (Fletcher et. al 2003). Academic eligibility is a motivator for athletes as it affords them all the opportunities that are open to them to perform, train and compete. All they need to do is maintain at least the minimum academic passing graded of 2.0 (C average). However according to McCormick and McCormick (2006) this is not easily achieved by many of the revenue-making high profile student-athletes. Any athlete whose academic performance falls below the accepted standard, set out by the NCAA, is automatically placed on 'Academic Probation' and is barred from training and competing. This bar is lifted once the individual has demonstrated better results and commitment to their studies. Continued academic probation can result in the relinquishment of an athletic scholarship.

However, Thomas (2008) discusses how student athletes have an advantage over non-athletes due to the incentives on offer. This in turn helps motivate them through their studies in an effort to remain academically eligible to enjoy all the sporting benefits afforded to them. Further, Aries et. Al (2004) did a comparison of athletes and non-athletes and found some differences in regards to motivations to succeed. They found the drive to compete, improve their performance and access to world class facilities were the drivers behind athletes' motivation in keeping themselves academically eligible. In contrast to this mind set, it was found that non-athletes motivation was purely academic in pursuit of a career in a relevant course of study. Furthermore, according to this study, several non-athletes did mention that choosing the institution to study at was also influenced by the profile of the athletic programmes, namely the basketball and football teams.

There is also an argument to suggest that Athletic Departments seek the best possible athletes for purely commercial reasons. This was highlighted in a USA Today (2017) article. This article highlighted the fact that with successful coaches typically come better recruitment/players, equating to better results which in turn means team and institutional accolades. From a commercial angle, this then stimulates interest in regards to television rights to broadcast games (common place amongst College basketball and football), increased enrolment of non-athletes and increased tuition fees as demand increases (Howard-Hamilton & Sina 2001). In recent years, there has also been a call for the NCAA to start paying student athletes due to the multi-million dollars being generated by successful programmes. However, this violates rules regarding amateur status of most governing bodies of amateur sport as well as the NCAA.

Further, there is an argument to suggest the student athletes are receiving payment through the form of their athletic scholarships, in some cases amounting to over \$200,000 for a four-year period.

Keeping student athletes on track both academically and athletically is also the purpose of the student athlete code of conduct. All institutions have such a document which is devised by the athletics department. By way of an example, see (see appendix 7.3) the University of Oregon's Student-Athlete's Code of Conduct (uoregon 2016) covers the following areas:

- Travel expectations
- Athletically related financial aid
- Good sportsmanship
- Academic expectations
- Attendance criteria
- Employment
- Medical responsibilities
- Compliance responsibilities

In regards to good sportsmanship for example, student athletes are expected to carry themselves in a manner on and off their field of play that represents their institution favourably. Drug testing is also an annual occurrence, attendance and academic monitoring is on-going and a good awareness of NCAA rules in regards to not accepting payment or donations is outlined. This highlights the serious nature of college sports in the US and additional responsibilities and expectations placed on student athletes. Further, as Hyatt (2003) explains, once student-athletes enter college, they have to start from scratch academically, socially and even to prove their position on the team. With the additional pressure of familiarising themselves with new rules and procedures, the first few months especially (freshman year) can be quite daunting and intimidating. However, with the support mechanisms in place, this can also be quite a seamless process.

2.13 Transition Theory: Change-Events

Student-Athletes encounter many transitions in their career academically, athletically and socially. Moving from one team to another, progressing to a higher level of academics and athletic performance, as well as the wider social environment, all provide challenges. The concept of "transition" was originally described as "as an event or non-event that results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and, thus, requires a corresponding change in one's behaviour and relationships" (Schlossberg, 1981, p.5). For example, while transitioning between high school and higher education in the same country can itself be a transitional challenge, embarking on this journey in another country adds another significant variable.

Wylleman and Lavallee (2004), in their developmental model, suggest that normative transitions, those that correspond to the expected movement from one phase to another (e.g., moving from amateur to professional sport), can occur in four overlapping areas of an athlete's

life: (a) transitions relating to the athletic career (e.g., initiation into a sport), (b) transitions relating to psychological development (e.g., moving from adolescence into adulthood), (c) transitions relating to social development (e.g., developing a partnership with a coach), and (d) transitions relating to educative and professional development (e.g., moving from secondary to higher education). These transitions may have an impact on more than one area and in different, often interdependent, ways. Transitions b, c and d are key areas which international student-athletes will experience when embarking on a golf scholarship in America.

Successful or positive transitions in sport are defined as those in which the athlete negotiated without any professional assistance, while in contrast, a negative or crisis transition being one in which the athlete required specific psychological support Sinclair and Orlick (1993). Successful transitions are therefore associated with effective coping and overcoming of related problems and barriers, while crisis or negative transitions are associated with ineffective coping and perceived need for professional intervention (Samuel & Tenenbaum, 2011). However, transitions can also be non-normative, events that are involuntary or unplanned (e.g., an injury or loss of form). Alfermann and Stambulova (2007) suggested that poor strategy selection and ineffective coping was a result of an inability by the athlete to analyse the situation correctly, a poor awareness of the demands of the transition, and a lack of resources to appropriately address those demands.

To understand this transitional process, Samuel and Tenenbaum (2011) devised a concept referred to as 'change-events.' A change event is not limited to a single recognisable transition, rather it encapsulates all events encountered by the student-athlete. On this basis, the number of transitions within a change-event are vast; (a) academically, (b) athletically and (c) socially. Samuel and Tenenbaum suggest that athletes experience an on-going psychological process that is visible in the way the athlete interacts with their environment, through his or her

decision making and choice of coping strategies. In the case of an international student-athlete beginning their first year of a sports scholarship in a new country, at a new college/university, at a higher level of study, these all constitute change-events and new challenges for the student-athlete to undertake.

2.14 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Research guided by SDT (Ryan and Deci 2000) is the second framework that aligns with student-athletes and their developmental experience in the American college golf environment. SDT centres on human motivation, personality and optimal functioning and claims that people have three innate psychological needs which are considered as universal necessities, these being:

1. Competence
2. Relatedness
3. Autonomy

Not only are these needs essential for individual growth and integration, but also for constructive social development and personal well-being (Ryan and Deci 2000). In the context of this study, SDT is an appropriate framework from which to explore student-athletes persistence and achievement in an athletic, academic and social context.

Under the domain of competence, individuals have the desire to control and master the environment. For international student-athletes, settling into their new environment in America is not necessarily immediate, however the support mechanisms in place to help freshman recruits are vast and comprehensive (Franklin 2006). For Simiyu (2010), integrating student-athletes into a positive learning environment both academically and athletically is vital for their feeling of belonging. This runs in parallel with the second competent of SDT of relatedness. For student-athletes to have the opportunity to reach their optimal functioning level

academically/athletically and socially, they need to be connected to and feel part of a caring environment. This is one component that Smith (1990) states is a particular strength of the US system when they highlight the clear togetherness of college sports teams, not just on the field of play but also academically and socially. Moreover, the additional hours that American coaches give to their players and team socially, further enhances and develops the student-athletes positive environment, supporting Ryan and Deci's (2000) claim of the need of relatedness in the community of involvement. The community in this case being that of college golf teams.

Finally, the third element of SDT is that of autonomy. This relates to having a sense of free will when doing an activity or acting out of our own interests and values. As Ryan and Deci (2000) outline, 'SDT is concerned not only with the specific nature of positive developmental tendencies, but it also examines social environments that are instrumental toward these tendencies.' It is posited that the US college golf system is one such environment that encourages positive development in student-athletes, and thus SDT will aid in the understanding of the journey student-athletes take when embarking on a golf scholarship in America.

It is into this context that the present paper sets out to investigate nine student-athletes who underwent a significant change-event when they moved from high school or College in the United Kingdom, into the United States sports system on golf scholarships. This event consisted of several interconnected changes, including, but not limited to a change in academic, athletic and social status. To gain an in-depth understanding of the interconnections, the researcher sought to investigate the student-athlete's personal experiences and capture the subjective interpretations of the student-athlete. Furthermore, It is proposed Wyllleman and Lavallee (2004) Transition model and Ryan and Deci (2000) SDT as potential frameworks that the present study aligns to.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Chapter

The aim of this study was to give an overview of the US college golf system, detail the experience of UK student-athletes studying and competing while on golf scholarships in America and critically analyse the transitions encountered in relation to academic, athletic and social development. The following chapter will outline the methodological approach utilised in this study. To explore an insider's perspective of the American Intercollegiate Sports System (Golf), face-to-face interviews were adopted with nine student-athletes. The data retrieved contributed towards a unique insight into their individual experiences of progressing to study and compete as a student-athlete in the US college sports system. A sample of nine participants agreed to participate, a vignette of each is included in appendix 7.1. Each of the nine participants were at various stages of their College/University careers, regarded in the American system as:

- Freshman = Year 1
- Sophomore = Year 2
- Junior = Year 3
- Senior = Year 4

To gain perspectives from student-athletes from a variety of institutions, participants were attending different Colleges and Universities across America. These covered Division 1 and Division 2 two-year NJCAA institutions, as well as four-year NCAA Division 1 and Division 2 institutions. Each participant was also on a varying level of golf scholarship.

3.2 Methodological Considerations

The theory building approach adopted in this study, comes about through the quest for subjective knowledge, elucidating a meaning and understanding of how and why things happen. Unlike quantitative research, these are non-quantifiable qualities to which qualitative research lends itself. The reason that this was the chosen method of research in this study is that it enabled the researcher to be alert to changes which occur, individual meanings, actions and interpretations of each participant. Qualitative research aims to highlight qualities which are non-quantifiable such as attitudes, feelings, thoughts, behaviour and experiences (Gratton & Jones 2010). These concepts are associated with the interpretive approach to knowledge (Silverman 1993), which can be used effectively to allow theory to emerge. Additionally, the researcher can then use this detailed data to identify emerging themes across the participants, and even aid in the construction of new concepts and models. As Strauss & Corbin (1998, pg.12) state:

The researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data.

In line with this approach, as outlined by Golafshani (2003), another paradigm in qualitative research is constructivism, which views knowledge as socially constructed which changes depending on the circumstances. This approach permits the analysis of social phenomena, exploring individual's behaviour and how they evolve in differing social contexts. In the realms of this study, the participants own stories from their early introduction to golf, through to their experiences as a Collegiate student-athlete in America is the journey being explored.

What constitutes valid knowledge and how it is obtained, influences methods of investigation, known as the epistemological stance of the researcher. While it has been claimed that the quantitative researcher

attempts to detach themselves as much as possible from the research process, qualitative researchers have come to embrace their involvement and role within the research, as Golafshani (2003) outlines. Essentially, the researcher is immersed and part of the qualitative research process. Considering the researcher himself was a product of the US Collegiate sports system, this in itself can bring about positives and some potential negatives to the study. The positives centring around the knowledge and experience of the US system, its coaches and processes, along with mutual ground and a natural rapport existing between participant and researcher. However, at the same time, negatives centre on the potential for bias on the research findings due to his own positive experience of the system being investigated. To guard against any potential bias as a result of this, informed consent protocols were strictly followed, along with a semi-structured interview schedule being piloted with a 'critical friend' (see appendix 7.2). The use of the pilot study with a critical friend afforded the opportunity to carry out a small scale test of the methods and procedures to be used in the main study. This assumes however, that the pilot study demonstrates that the methods and procedures can work, (Gibbs 2008).

Every effort was also made to ensure the findings reflect the viewpoint of the participants and not the researcher involved. There was no attempt to influence participant's views during interview. The researcher was aware that to allow richness of data to develop (Aronson 1995), participants should be permitted time and the opportunity to reflect deeper on their accounts of their experiences. Since the researcher set out to examine the experiences and interpretations/motivations of social structures and patterns within the US College sports system, a constructivist / interpretive epistemological stance was adopted. Gergen (1999) outlines that the basic contention of the constructionist argument is that reality is socially constructed by and between the persons who experience it.

The research design for the study took the form of semi-structured interviews, which have become a commonly used qualitative methodology for collecting data, (Aronson 1995). Thereafter, thematic analysis from data received from the face-to-face interviews took place. From there, the next step was to identify and catalogue related patterns into key themes and sub themes. These are defined units derived from patterns which arose in conversational topics, vocabulary and recurring activities (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006). It was decided this would be the most effective way to gather information as it suits questions relating to the participants individual experiences, views and perceptions of the system they are a part of.

3.3 Participants

Nine student-athletes were recruited for the purpose of this study, who were all in different years of Colleges and Universities across America, as well as a variety of Division 1 and 2 institutions. Each participant was on a golf scholarship ranging from 50% - 100% of the total cost of their tuition fees, room/board, insurance and books. The inclusion criteria was that the student-athletes had completed at least their first year of study and athletic competition (freshman year) at their respective institution. This was the minimum requirement to ensure the student-athletes had engaged in one year of studying and competing in the US college golf system. All nine participants came from middle class two parent families who remained together throughout the young student-athletes development in golf. Five male (average age 20.8, SD 2.95) and four female participants (average age 20.5, SD 2.38) were recruited, to try to ensure a balance between sexes. One male participant was of Spanish origin. Four of the participants having progressed to College / University in the US on golf scholarships after their final year at high school and five progressing to the US after one or two years of college in the UK.

Two female participants were 19 years old and progressed to Universities in the US, on full golf scholarships, after their final year at high school in Scotland. Both were in their first year (freshman year) at University at the time of interview.

The remaining two female participants were 20 and 21 years old and progressed to University in the US, on a golf scholarship, after completing two years of study at College in Scotland. At the time of interview, both have graduated with one returning to take up additional studies at University in Scotland, while the other has taken up employment at a golf academy in the US.

Three male participants were 21, 22 and 25 years old and progressed to the US, on golf scholarships, after carrying out two years at the same College in Scotland. One has since graduated and is competing on the Alps professional mini tour in Spain, one initially started at a junior college then after graduating progressed to a Division 2 University on scholarship and is now back in Scotland furthering his studies at University. The final male participant started at a Division 2 junior College, graduated in June 2015 and progressed to University in Chicago on a golf scholarship.

The remaining two male participants were 18 years old and progressed to Universities, on varying amounts of golf scholarship, after their final year of high school. Both are now into their second year (sophomore year) at University.

3.4 Piloting the Interview Process

Prior to carrying out the final project, the researcher adopted the use of a 'critical friend' (Boyatzis 1998) to test the research questions, similar to that of a pilot study. This helped to ensure the questions were fit for purpose as well as other aspects such as the layout, testing the use of a dictaphone recording device during interview, question sequencing and

appropriateness of the questions (Cohen and Ariela 2011). The interview with the critical friend was carried out face-to-face, at a location of their convenience in order to try to replicate the final interview conditions. Additionally, this experience was important in developing the researchers own skills in conducting a semi-structured interview under replicated conditions. The critical friend had previous experience of the US Collegiate system having studied and competed many years ago, enabling terminology and wording to be more easily understood. The fact that the researcher was also a past graduate of the US Intercollegiate Sports system may have helped with credibility and validity, due to the ability to talk using relevant terminology without confusion. This can help with the flow, understanding and aid in the emergence of richer data from the participants.

3.5 Procedure

Once full ethical approval was granted by the university's ethical board (see appendix 7.5), interviews were arranged at mutually convenient times with each participant. Prior to interview, each student-athlete was briefed via email regarding the aims and background of the study and a participants information sheet and informed consent protocols were adhered to (see appendix 7.6 and 7.7). The interviews lasted from 35 - 50 minutes and were audio-recorded using a Sony ICD-PX240 digital voice recorder. The interviews took place at each of the participant's home golf clubs and the researcher was also aware of the need to facilitate each interview without overly leading questions or directing the interviewees talk, (Martindale et al., 2007). Grinyer (2002) suggests beginning an interview with some 'peripheral' questions to put the participant at ease and to allow the researcher a 'way in' to the interview. The interview comprised of three sections: (1) Demographic Information; (2) Narrative; (3) Perception of being a student-athlete as part of the US College Golf System.

While each participant was known to the researcher, the demographic questions allowed an additional 'way in' and helped with breaking the ice. These questions were general in nature, relating to the participants age, where and when they started to play golf. The narrative section extracted participant's experiences in golf from their formative years through to becoming a student-athlete on a scholarship. The final section afforded the opportunity to gain each participants reflection on their experience of being a student-athlete in America: specifically, the structures and systems involved along with their perceptions of their own development academically/athletically and socially as a results of being part of such a system. Finally, each interview concluded by asking participants whether there were any further comments that they wished to add and with the debriefing of the participants.

3.6 Data Analysis

Throughout the research process and once data had been collected, the nine interviews were transcribed verbatim into a Word document which together with the audio data, was kept securely by the researcher. Any identifiable information pertaining to the participants was removed from the transcribed text and each participant was also assigned a pseudonym (see appendix 7.1), an essential component ensuring participant anonymity in research (Wiles et al., 2008). The qualitative data collected underwent a thematic analytical process, including comparisons and contrasts, coding, categorising and constant comparison complementing the familiarisation of the data (Kleinsasser 2000). This triangulation of data received from multiple and different sources, enabled the researcher to form themes or categories in the study, which could then be reduced further (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Inter-rater reliability was employed to test the subjectivity of the data ensuring that the researcher's judgements were consistent with another rater. This was carried out with the critical friend who assisted in the initial pilot of the interview questions, prior to interviewing each student-athlete. Furthermore, this was utilised to

prevent researcher bias in the evaluation and categorising of the themes which emerged, therefore increasing the validity of the research findings (Patton 1999). To ensure the credibility, trustworthiness and transparency of the Interview transcripts, once transcribed, each participant was provided with a copy which was signed off for confirmation and validation of content. This process helped to ensure the findings were not simply a reflection of the authors own preconceptions surrounding the US Intercollegiate Sports System. As Davies and Dodd (2002, p.281) exclaims, 'there is a quantitative bias in the concept of rigor; we now move on to develop our reconception of rigor by exploring subjectivity, reflexivity, and the social interaction of interviewing'.

3.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced the qualitative research methods employed to investigate a group of student-athletes, who were competing and studying while on a golf scholarship in the US Intercollegiate Sports System. It provided a rationale for adopting an interpretive and constructivist approach as well as the use of semi structured interviews to collect data. Together with discussing the position and epistemological stance of the researcher within the process of the study, pertinent ethical considerations and protocol was explained. The next chapter will discuss and evaluate the study's findings, which emerged from the qualitative methods outlined in this chapter.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter outlines and investigates the themes that emerged from the analysis of the semi structured interviews. Direct quotes from the participants are used to illustrate the data and to help the reader gain an understanding of how and where the themes emerged. These emergent themes are then compared to theoretical frameworks and previous research related to student-athletes and the US College sports system. The participant's perceptions of the US College Golf system and how it has influenced and shaped them will be addressed. The table below illustrates the categories and themes which emerged.

Table 4 Emerging Categories and Themes

Theme	Sub Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formative Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant Others• Early Years / Multi Sports• Early / Late Specialisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruiting / Transition• Competition• Academic/Monitoring/Scheduling
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team Ethos / Status• The Student-Athlete• Motivation for Success

4.2 Theme: Formative Years

All participants interviewed made clear mention of the influence of a significant other in regards to their introduction to the game of golf, in each case by a family member.

I was first introduced to golf by my dad and brother. We'd go with dad to the course and hit balls on the practice range and it was kind of just a fun thing to do. My local golf club had a really vibrant junior section as well, so every Friday, dad would take us to the club and we were taken through all the stages, so that's kind of how I got into playing it more regularly, thinking this is good fun, making new friends, it was great.

All nine participants emphasised this consistently and again was evident from the outset:

I was first introduced to golf by my father. He used to play a lot with his friends and I became intrigued however, I did think initially it was a bit of an old man's sport. I was 9 years old at the time and I remember watching golf on the television with my dad, and he would start explaining what was happening and some of the rules. I asked if I could try and from there I got hooked. It was always fun!

The formative years quickly became one of the single most important factors when interviewing each participant. One participant stated... 'my grandfather bought me a set of clubs for my ninth birthday and took me to the range one day. It was fun because I always looked up to my grandfather and he encouraged me to try.' In contrast, one participant discussed her introduction into the game and although her father was instrumental, 'I kind of found it myself.. although my dad had wanted me to play from quite a young age, but I wasn't that interested then. But I remember watching the Masters Golf tournament on television and thinking wow, they were amazing and then saying to my dad I wanted to

try it.... It was kind of fun, so I just went with him one day and from there it became a routine which I enjoyed!

For another participant, her father 'started me in golf pretty much as soon as I could walk or hold a golf club...'. One participant was introduced to the game as a result of 'being left my grandfather's clubs when he passed away and my dad would take me to the course or range.'

It became apparent from the responses from each participant, that a comparison could be drawn between their early formative years' experience in sport to that of research by Bloom (1985), who highlighted that it was in the 'context of the children's homes, or with family, that the children began developing simple skills in the talent arena.' Additionally, Blooms research makes mention of 'parental sacrifice' in introducing their children into sports and ultimately keeping them engaged in the sport through lifestyle adjustment sacrifices. This is an area which is explored further under the analysis of the sub theme centred on the early years, middle years and later years of the participants.

What also became apparent during the early part of each interview was the 'fun' component at the initial introduction to the game. Spending time in a fun and sporty social setting with family was important and when asked if the game remained fun, one participant outlined... 'it did remain fun but in a different way.. it started out as kind of innocent fun with dad, family and as I played more and more and moved into the junior section at my club, it was then the competition and trying to beat one another that took over. It was still fun though, just in a different way.' This supports research carried out by Cafaro (2013) who found that one of the mediators in the development of young golfers during their early teenage years was that of a competitive environment.

Moreover, one participant discussed how:

It was always fun in the beginning and that was what kept me coming back.. as I got a little older (10 years old) it was getting to play with other/older juniors at the club, making new friends and then the competition with them that became the new fun.

Another participant was introduced to the game by their grandfather as well. From a strong golfing family, it was perhaps inevitable that golf was one sport they would try from an early age. 'I think my grandfather (and my dad) secretly hoped for a grandson / son to take to the golf course.. however, when my sister and I came along, I was the one who was more sporty and enjoyed going to the course and range with my grandfather.' They went on to add that 'by the time I was 12, I had joined one of my local golf clubs and started in junior competitions to gain a handicap.'

Two participants of the study 'bucked' the trend of the others, as they picked the game up slightly later into their early teenage years and did not start playing more competitively until their fifth year at high school, aged 16 and 17. However, when asked how they started in the game of golf, they stated that although they were later in picking up the game, Roger outlined 'that it was my father who introduced the game to me.'

To understand this data in context, it is important to further consider the findings whilst reflecting on previous research. In a paper published by Pierce et. al (2011) analysing the early experiences of international student-athletes in America prior to them attending College or University, they stated that behaviour is a function of the person and their environment. The common denominator in each of the participants feedback was the introduction to the game by a family member / significant other, while then the social and competitive environment with other juniors (experienced at golf clubs) becoming the main attraction.

Additionally, this aligns very closely with the first phase of the overlapping areas of an athlete's life, as set out in Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) transitions theory. Here, the transition relates to the initiation into the sport (by a family member / significant other) and suggests that this expected movement from one phase to another is a normative transition. With the early experience in the game (with family and other juniors) being particularly positive for each participant in the study, this also supports Ryan and Deci (2000) SDT. Specifically, the fact that each student-athlete freely engaged in the activity of golf and found the experience to be enjoyable, demonstrates an intrinsic motivation which compliments Ryan and Deci (2000) domain of autonomy.

4.3 Subtheme: Early Years / Multi Sports to Specialisation

Eight of nine participants were actively involved in other sports during their early adolescent years, 11 to 15 years of age. 'Balancing my swimming and golf became the norm' stated one. Interestingly, they initially:

Specialised in swimming and hadn't really an interest in taking up another sport. It was all swimming all day, every day when I could I would be at the pool and for training early in the morning.

When they reflected on the balance between their engagement in sport in the early years, they explained that 'even at the age of sixteen, I was thinking there were so many opportunities in the sport (golf) rather than swimming. Since golf is an outdoor sport, which I really like, different scenery and locations all the time, whereas, with swimming, you're just looking at the bottom of the pool every day. It gets very tedious!'

Eventually, specialising in golf took place with each participant between the ages of 13 to 16 with only one choosing to specialise earlier at the age of 12. That participant explained that 'golf was kind of the family

sport, the one we all played and was really the only sport I took seriously from a young age.'

Another of the sample group emphasised the fact that they were playing football, rugby and golf through high school, but by the time:

I was fourteen I was Captain of the school rugby team and I remember speaking to the Head of PE after a game one day and saying I can't play anymore... I was too afraid of getting injured and not being able to golf.

The interesting thing was at high school, golf was not really a sport that was played by many kids or offered through school.. but I knew it was my main sport and one I was more focussed on, so it was at that point that I stopped playing competitive hockey.

This participant highlighted that some of their fondest memories through high school were 'playing on the hockey team, the travel and the training.. I refused to give that up and played all the way through until my final year. Hockey took us abroad and all over the country and golf at high school, well, we had a small group who played but there wasn't anything really organised for golf like there was for hockey, so I didn't want to miss out on the team involvement there. It was really through dad and my golf club that gave me a similar experience in golf and one which I equally enjoyed, latterly choosing golf in my final year at high school as the sport for me, when thinking about possible scholarships in America to play and study.'

It is evident from the analysis of the formative years' theme that each participants experience in regards to the introduction to the game and latterly specialising in purely golf, aligns with The Developmental Model of Sport Participation (Cote et. al, 2007). Specifically, during the ages of 12 - 15 (labelled as the Specialising Years) this was the period where all participants started to reduce the number of sports they played. Following this period, from ages 15-18 moving to the Investment Years

(Cote 2007), eight of the nine student-athletes outlined this period as the time they committed to one sport only (golf) and thus increased the amount of deliberate practice in the hope of reaching a standard commensurate of gaining a golf scholarship to America.

Moreover, this theme is also consistent with normative transitions relating to athletic career progression as set out in Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) transitions theory. In regards to the SDT framework of Ryan and Deci (2000), the experience of each participant moving through the specialising years demonstrates their positive growth across the domains of competence, relatedness and autonomy. Further, the motivation demonstrated by each participant during this time specifically highlights their persistence in wanting to engage with and improve their performance in the sport of golf. By choosing to adapt and change their sporting environment to focus purely on golf, shows a close correlation to 'being more self-motivated and taking ownership of self', an aspect inherent in positive growth tendencies according to Ryan and Deci (2000).

4.4 Theme: Environment

At the time of interview, all participants had completed at least their freshman year (first year) of college. It was noticeable from their responses that all nine had moments of homesickness initially, an aspect that was exacerbated due to the student-athletes distance away from home. Moreover, while discussing challenges/transitions faced during the initial months of moving to America, each of the nine participants highlighted the dynamic outlined in Figure 2 above:

The first month... or few months were important for adjusting to life out there as a student-athlete. My golf dipped and I didn't make the team at the beginning and I was struggling with a couple of my classes so it wasn't easy to start with.. Adapting to the really hot weather and different

golf course conditions (and grasses) does take time as well.. Being a student and an athlete is a lot of work, but you just get used to it.. My game has turned around and improved and I've surprised myself how well I'm doing academically.. It just takes time and support.

This finding supports previous research by Collins and MacNamara (2012) who suggest that talent potential can benefit from, or even need, a variety of challenges to facilitate eventual higher-level performance. In the example above, there are parallels as by the end of their first year at University although they encountered deterioration in golf performance and struggled academically initially, with the appropriate support they emerged at a higher level academically and athletically.

Moreover, this theme experienced by the student-athletes also relates to normative transition theory. In this case, the fourth transition of Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) theory relating to educative and professional development of the athlete, the individual is moving from secondary to higher education but on an international scale. Reflecting on this experience during the initial few weeks/months of their student-athlete career in the US, each participant saw this as a positive transition while recognising it as a challenge and a time that required extra effort on their part.

Moreover, Collins et al. (2015) suggest that trying to support athletes and counter these naturally occurring 'life stressors' can be misdirected and achieve the opposite effect. What is apparent from all nine participants in this study however, is that the support provided at their respective institutions across the academic, athletic and social domains has aided their positive growth experience thus far. While these are developmental experiences and critical points of development that could occur while at university in the UK, each of the nine sampled in this study specifically outlined how being a student-athlete in America accelerated the need for them to stand on their own two feet:

While studying for a year at college in the UK before heading to America helped to prepare me somewhat for moving further away... looking back it was completely different. I was still able to go home at the weekend or even mid-week if I had to if I needed help or anything or to see family and friends. Being in a foreign country a long way from home for long periods basically makes you more independent. It has helped me overcome challenges with the support of team mates and that support network...

Each participant also made mention of competition academically. Namely the support they gave each other in their team with class work and assessments out with the athletic arena. Institutions and the NCAA also present awards annually to athletic teams who achieve the highest GPA as well as individual student-athletes. Student-athletes who gain recognition on either are added to the Academic Honour Role for their institution. Each participant discussed this area and how they found it benefited them:

At College (University) in the States, we do everything as a team. We compete against one another, we practice and train with one another, we live with one another, we socialise with one another and we support one another with class work. I never really experienced anything like this before, but I love it! I'm not sure this experience would have been possible studying at home.

The analysis of this theme further emphasises the positive and motivated outlook all participants had regarding not only their academic development, but also their athletic and social development. Moreover, they questioned whether they would have had a similar experience if they had stayed at home and studied in the UK. This finding correlates closely with Ryan and Deci (2000) SDT and the three domains of competence, relatedness and autonomy. The evidence from the analysis of this theme strongly suggests that the environment (in all facets) that the student-athletes experienced in the American College Golf system, has been successful in supporting their positive psychological growth. As a result,

this in turn has resulted in them being more self-motivated, energised and integrated into a new system and culture, key elements that SDT outline as fundamental growth factors.

4.5 Subtheme: Transition to America

Application to College or University typically takes place during the final year of high school in the United Kingdom, whether that be fourth, fifth or sixth year. Applying via UCAS for Higher Education levels of study is the standardised norm, while College application can be done directly through online application processes.

However, as College Golf Coaches across the US recruit players at least two years in advance, for a UK based student interested in gaining a sports scholarship after high school, leaving it until their final year to apply is often too late Koehler (1996). Seven of the nine participants recalled this aspect, with one outlining:

I knew of some older lads from my County who went to the States but I had no idea how to go about it. My dad spoke to their families and got some information about consultants who specialised in the golf scholarship field. We met with them, realised we needed their help and after being given all the information, we took on their services. This was during my fifth year at high school, so it was by luck that it was two years from when I'd be looking to start in America. If we'd left it any later, after finding out more about the coaches recruiting patterns, I might have missed out!

As a paper by Watt & Moore III (2001) titled 'Who are Student Athletes' outlined, competition for sports scholarships in America is a global business. They looked into the recruiting patterns of 252 student athletes (American) on sports scholarships and found that the majority had signed National Letters of Intent (NLI) between their sophomore and junior years

in high school in America (equivalent 4th & 5th year high school in the UK). In a few cases, teenagers as young as 13 / 14 years old were 'verbally' committing to some big time golf programmes across America. With this in mind, it is therefore of paramount importance for high school's / consultants and coaches in the UK advising young players and their families, to do so in a timely manner. This is however dependant on players and families being aware of where to turn for advice in the first instance.

Another participant emphasised that they: *Left it very late to look into the US system. I was already at College in the UK when I decided I really wanted to jump ship and try for a golf scholarship to the States. My mum, dad and I met with local consultants we'd heard about and they made this a reality in a quick period of time. My family and I had no idea of the complexities or timescale involved in the process and I was lucky to get the opportunity at short notice.*

This was a similar case for four other participants in the study, having already left high school and doing a College course in the UK. If a young performer hopes to gain a scholarship to America, the date they finish high school is of paramount importance. From this date, if they wish to start at an NCAA Division 1 University, they have 5 years within which to complete a four year sports scholarship and undergraduate degree. If they take one year out after high school, or attend a college for one year this is regarded as a 'grace year' by the NCAA meaning the student-athlete would need to start the following year at the latest. This rule does not apply for Junior Colleges where there is more flexibility in regards to eligibility and age of student-athletes.

As Koehler (1996) outlines, knowing when the right time is to apply for a sports scholarship is key. With the American sports culture more in tune with the college sports scholarship structure post compulsory education, international student-athletes can be at a disadvantage without knowing

until it is potentially too late. The recruitment process for one participant was perhaps a whirlwind in comparison to others in this study.

They intimated an interest in possibly furthering her studies and golf by way of a scholarship in the spring of the same year that she started in autumn. Thinking it was too late and the American system too expensive, an opportunity... *came up in May and by the middle of August I was on a plane and heading out there! I had already accepted an unconditional offer from a University in Scotland and decided the States wasn't feasible both timescale wise and financially without a full scholarship which I knew there could be no guarantee of. I was lucky the consultants approached me informing me of an opportunity that might fit my golf and academics.. I got a full scholarship and off I went. Best decision I ever made.*

For two of the sample group, the thought of America started during their fourth year at high school, coincidentally more in tune with their American counterparts. They had been competing in junior opens for two years and at county level for a season, and their results on the golf course and in the classroom were certainly on track for a good scholarship. They carried out *'a lot of ground work, looking into the golf and academic side'* so this started over two years in advance of them going. Giving themselves this lead time enabled them to design a mid to long term plan, knowing what they needed to work on academically and golf wise, giving them the best possible chance of attracting a good scholarship. If any of the participants had been a high school student-athlete in America, school counsellors would have been taking on this role and supporting them through the process.

Moreover, Koehler (1996) research highlighted the importance of exactly this role by high school counsellors in America:

Like coaches, counsellors have pre-season, in-season, post-season responsibilities when helping high school student-athletes. (pg 151)

For all of the participants in this study, this kind of advice was not available at high schools in Scotland. They took on this role themselves to the best of their abilities not knowing the system, while at the same time, seeking help from scholarship consultants and friends who had been through the system, to help connect with American coaches. One participant added, *'it is a minefield knowing where to start if you don't really know and understand the system. How to apply, who to apply to and to what Colleges were all questions I had.'*

In light of the analysis from the theme of transition to America, it once again aligns well with Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) transition theory. Specifically, while this period of the student-athletes career can be exciting, it is also a period of significant information gathering and consulting. This is considered a non-normative or negative transition by Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) as the student-athlete and their families seek professional help to aid with this transition. While this is regarded as such, thereafter with the new found knowledge and experience gained, the student-athlete (as well as their family) are better equipped moving forward. This also highlights that an initial negative transition can develop into a positive meaning that future non-normative transitions are more likely to be dealt with positively (Wylleman and Lavallee 2004). Considering this theme with SDT, with the recruitment process is a very new and challenging experience, strong feelings of competence and relatedness are unlikely. Yet with the correct advice and support given, persistence demonstrated by each participant during this phase resulted in positive outcomes (Ryan and Deci 2000).

4.6 Subtheme: Competition

For many, good weather, world-class facilities and competing at a higher level are key reasons for student-athletes applying to the US College Sports System. This was no different and perhaps even more attractive for the majority of participants in this study, given their homeland of Scotland being infamous for inclement weather.

With regards to the level of competition in American College sports, given the corporate and commercialised nature of the system, athletic departments now mirror the business world and Athletic Directors likened to 'Chief Financial Officers' (Jozsa Jr. 2012). With this comes added pressure on the coach to perform, as salaries reflect results similarly to that of the English Premier Football League. This in turn places pressure on the recruitment of student-athletes from where coaches can search on an international scale.

'The game is taken more seriously in the States', was discussed by all participants. They referred to the serious nature of competition they'd experienced. This was mirrored by all nine participants in the study, with one outlining:

As a first year freshman, you have to hit the ground running... coaches are looking for that. Trying to qualify to make the team is like a tournament in itself with several rounds of qualifying prior to each event and often on numerous different Tour length courses. This was great and is what I found really sharpened my game, the challenge being you are competing against Sophomores/Juniors and Seniors who all know the courses. That is the biggest golfing challenge I found initially. However, that's the way it is in the professional ranks and the US system certainly prepares players better for that.

This was a sentiment echoed across all nine participants, with another adding ‘...*you either had to swim pretty quickly or sink*’. Hyatt (2003) emphasises this further when he discusses the fact that once student-athletes enter college, they start from scratch in all facets. This includes socially, academically as well as on the athletics team. Each participant also mentioned this in their interviews, that although they all settled into college life well, they did have their moments of home sickness, experienced a ‘wobble’ and realisation that they were now a small fish in a very big pond. One stated:

While you do quite quickly gain a feeling of belonging, you also at times have a feeling of, wow.... I am now competing on a global scale against other student-athletes from all corners of the world! Everything can be a bit overwhelming, especially during the early stages...

Seven of the nine participants also made mention of the fact that they failed to qualify for their very first college tournament in America. *Everything does hit you quickly and reflecting on the first few weeks, it was really difficult to focus and concentrate on everything. While it is an exciting time, it can be overwhelming initially. However, the coaching staff are great and very supportive.*

Figure 3 below highlights the key elements, and challenges, that the student-athlete is required to balance. These can be particularly difficult to manage during the early months of arriving at College.

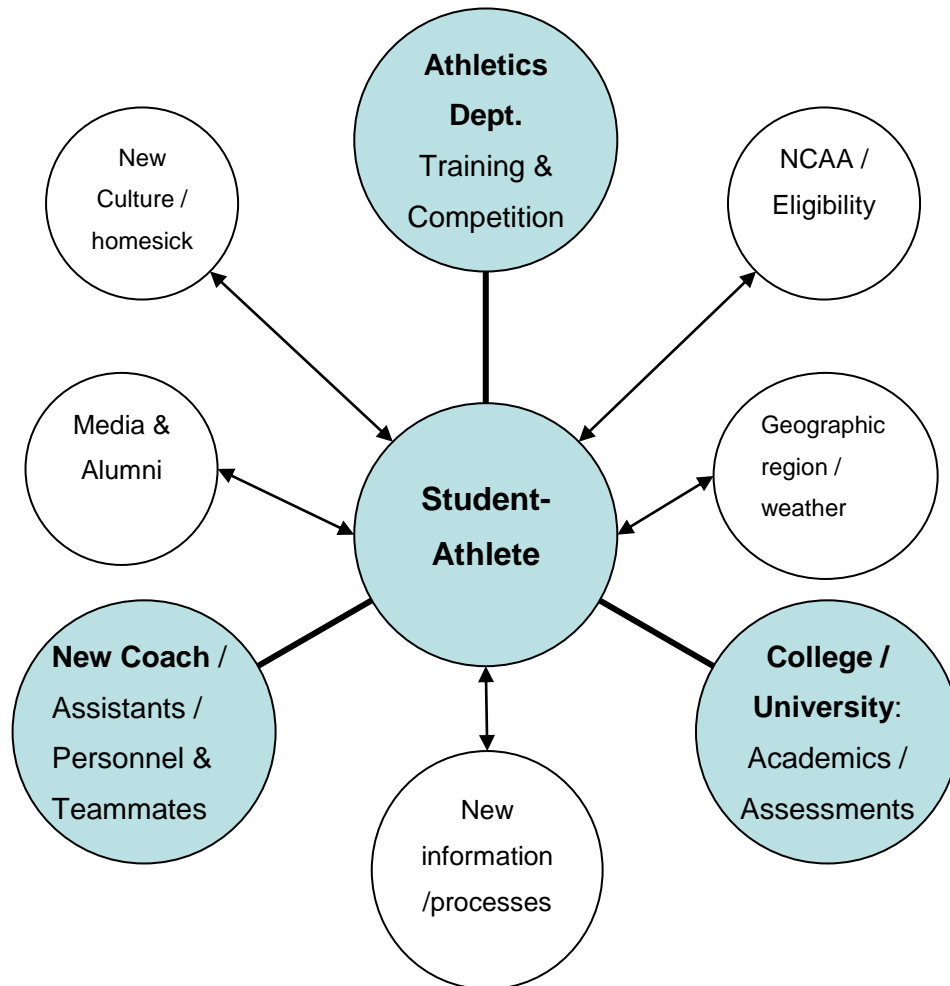


Figure 2 Year 1 - The Immediate Transitions Facing Student-Athletes

Lavallee (2004) highlights, the four normative transition phases:

1. Transitions relating to athletic career
2. Transitions relating to psychological development
3. Transitions relating to social development
4. Transitions relating to educative and professional development

With regards to the theme of competition, the experience of all participants in the study is/was of quite intense competition to make their

team. Higher level competition they had never experienced before, under different conditions and changing golfing environments. It is evident therefore, that each participants experience is congruent with Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) framework, particularly the transitions relating to normative athletic career and psychological development. However, as most participants (seven of nine) did not qualify for their first college tournament, this can be regarded as a non-normative transition (Wylleman and Lavallee 2004) and a change-event (Samuel and Tenenbaum 2011). While this can be and was seen as negative and created a level of anxiety at the time, the fact that the participants overcame this challenge illustrates that experiences traditionally perceived as negative are not always harmful. Further, Collins et al (2012) outlined that the journey athletes take should in fact not be smooth and thus should actually include 'bumps' along the way. However, as Ryan and Deci (2000) SDT highlights, the maintenance and enhancement of intrinsic motivation requires supportive conditions, an aspect all nine participants outlined when they discussed the encouraging and supportive culture of the coaching staff.

4.7 Subtheme: Academic Monitoring and Scheduling

As has been previously intimated, College golf in the US is one non-profit making sport which the profit making sports help support financially. As with other non-revenue making college sports, the professional ranks do not draft in players directly from the collegiate structure onto the PGA Tour.

At the time of interview, four of the participants had successfully completed their studies in America to undergraduate level. During the interviews, it was clear that each participant had set a primary goal of gaining a qualification:

The academics in the States the first year are quite general regardless of what Major (degree) you end up choosing. The system allowed more

flexibility and for me to bed in and get used to life/studying/competing in the US and by the time I was a sophomore, I was ready to tackle the more challenging aspects of my degree. I understood that I was a student first and an athlete second and my main aim was to gain a good qualification.

This notion of a 'student first and athlete second' is one which is emphasised by the majority of athletic college coaches in the US. Coaches, like faculty, strive to influence / improve / modify behaviours in their student-athletes in a positive way on the field of play, while likewise faculty do in the classroom. However, the Coaches role quite often extends beyond that of purely developing the performance athletically in their athletes:

In terms of academic support, our coach as well as academic advisors and professors encouraged us with our studies. We also have a study hall where everyone on the team studies together.

As Carodine et. Al (2001) outlines, Higher Education institutions have realised their obligation to provide a supportive environment as soon as possible for their student-athletes to succeed. This extends further than purely each individual institution however, as in 1991, the NCAA passed legislation requiring all institutions to provide academic counselling services to all student-athletes, (Pierce 2011). This was outlined by each participant when they said:

Our class timetables are designed for us by academic advisors, around our practice and qualifying. Each day, classes run from 0830 to approximately 12.30pm and thereafter we are either at the golf course or training.. whichever our coach decides. I couldn't really have experienced this in the UK I don't think.

After completing their studies and scholarships in the US, two participants decided to return and continue their studies in the UK. As they had not accessed all funding available to them, they were still eligible for two

more years Higher Education funding in the UK. They were accepted into the final year of a degree programme in sports and exercise science, and joined the University Golf Team as well.

When discussing experiences in the US compared to that of the UK, they discussed at some length how:

It's very different. In the States, College sports are just run more professionally, taken more seriously and the players are in tune with that. Training, practice, qualifying and tournaments are all planned out and we had a dedicated golf coach who took care of everything.

They went on to add how their current experience is differing:

Do not get me wrong, I am enjoying continuing studying at University back home (in the UK) but it is very different. The culture... For example, we organise our own practice, there is no free team kit, no free memberships at local clubs and no dedicated golf coach scheduling our activities or coaching. It's more like social golf really.. Even when we go to tournaments, there is more of an emphasis on team socialising and having fun in that way than really taking the tournament too seriously. In the States, we would have a curfew and would not dream of drinking or anything like that around tournament time.

One of the key success factors in helping new international student-athletes merge into the culture of College life is that of student orientations (Gunn and eddy 1989). The participants in this study outlined the importance of faculty and staff coming together to show a visible unity and relationship between the departments of the institution in meaningful activities.

As part of their initial orientation, student-athletes take part in orientations in many of the following areas:

1. Academic advising
2. Registering for classes

3. Academic progress reports
4. Workshops (including life skills)
5. Study hall and tutorial
6. Peer mentors

One participant now in their junior year at a University in Florida talked about their experience the first week of arriving:

When I arrived, the first week was international student-athlete orientation. This involved meeting lots of staff, other international student-athletes and 'normal' international students not on athletic scholarships which was really nice. There were lots of workshops, registering for classes which athletes got to do first, and bbq's with faculty and staff. It was a nice way to settle in.

It appears the participants experience is consistent with recommendations made by Gunn and Eddy (1989) who highlight that student-athletes should take part in numerous orientations and activities which serve as mediators between faculty and the student-athlete. This area of student-athlete support by way of orientations the first week was consistent across all nine participants. All participants, on reflection, did emphasise the variety of orientations they received and how this support helped to settle them in during the first and most important weeks of their student-athlete careers.

Considering Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) transitions theory in relation to this theme perhaps highlights the importance of the normative yet negative transitions student-athletes need to progress through during the early days/weeks of arriving in college. While extra assistance is needed and provided during initial stages of the first year, these negative transitions only last for a short period. Student-athlete orientations are specifically set up to aid with the seamless transition of students from all over the world into the US Collegiate Sport System. This is a critical period, one which each participant discussed at length and as Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) emphasise, this type of activity provides the student-

athlete with the tools to help them make positive transitions thereafter; events in which the student-athlete does not require any professional intervention. Thus aiding their autonomy and ability to make good decisions moving forward. The SDT framework of Ryan and Deci (2000) also helps to make sense of what the student-athletes are experiencing at this time. The orientation activities by institutions (and outlined by each participant under this theme) helped them settle into the American system more seamlessly. From a psychological perspective, each of the nine student-athletes felt very well supported during the early / critical period of landing at their institution in the US. This in turn helped them moving forward into the early weeks of life as a student-athlete as their feelings of competence, relatedness and autonomy grew, ultimately helping each of them overcome subsequent challenges along the way.

The academic monitoring of the student athletes can come from several angles within the academic and faculty structures. Of the nine participants questioned in this study, all of them made mention of the fact that their coach was aware of their academic 'standing' at any one point during each semester. Indeed, one such regulation stipulated by the NCAA regarding student-athletes on scholarships is that they must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 (grade C average) to remain eligible. However, institutions do have the authority to raise this minimum score to whatever they like, typically into the region of 2.25, (Simons et al. 1999). The Golf Coach can also be required by the Athletic Director to provide academic updates on their team, however this varies from institution to institution and can also be assigned to the role of the Athletic Academic Advisors. All nine participants outlined the motivational drive they had for academics as a result of the monitoring and support that is in place for them:

It is made clear from the start that we are students first and athletes second. If we fall behind academically, you can be placed on academic probation meaning no tournament play or qualifying until your grades / GPA improves. Nobody wants that! But with the support in place to help

us, this can make the process of passing a class or catching up much easier.

During the course of each interview, all participants openly mentioned their GPA up to the point of their programme of study. Of the nine participants sampled, the lowest GPA was 2.5 (middle C average) with the highest being 3.75 (just below an A average). While this range of GPA may not be consistent with the larger student-athlete population, this finding is in agreement with previous research by Simons et al. (1999) who identified differences in GPA's between revenue and non-revenue athletes. Their research also highlighted that the non-revenue athletes in sports like golf, demonstrated higher levels of intrinsic motivation for academic achievement compared to the revenue making sports of football (American football) and basketball. Additionally, Comeaux (2011) highlighted significant variations between these student-athlete groups, citing that revenue making athletes seldom place as much importance on academics and are motivated by external influences such as rewards and incentives (Parsons 2013). Indeed, as each of the nine participants in this study had experienced at least one full year as a student-athlete in the US, they were now in a stronger position to turn potential negative transitions into positive ones requiring little to no assistance for successful achievement. As each participant in the study progresses into their next year academically/athletically and socially, in line with Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) transition theory, they are continually becoming better able to interact with their environment and choose appropriate coping strategies for new change-events and challenges.

Additionally, with at least their freshman year behind them, the findings from this theme also support Ryan and Deci (2000) SDT as the required domains of competence, relatedness and autonomy are evident and indeed are growing over time with each student-athlete.

4.8 Theme: Identity

All nine participants spoke at some length regarding the theme of identity of student-athletes and that of the team ethos. While each participant was competing for different institutions and in different Divisions, they all made mention of the term 'student-athlete' and what that meant to them in America. Having just completed their first year, one participant was amazed at:

The team spirit and feeling of togetherness. We all work together, pull for each other. We understand that academics come first and golf second, so both are equally important really. So we help motivate each other in both. The term student-athlete really represents who we are. Nobody got left behind.

Another stated that:

We would support the other teams, like basketball, tennis and soccer. All the athletes live close together and would socialise and get to know one another.. there was a real sport community and positive atmosphere.

Each participant mentioned the notion of being a student and an athlete. Each being mutually reinforcing while recognising that academics do still prevail, the positive environment created athletically amongst the team seems to filter into academics (and socially) in college life in America. It is within this sporting community amongst other international student-athletes experiencing the same system, which provided an environment for the participants in this study to react positively to multiple change

events. This finding is congruent with stage 2 of Samuel and Tenenbaum (2011) scheme of change for sport psychology practice (SCSPP). It is apparent that each of the nine participants in this study decided to act positively (due to previous experience) when facing a change-event, in the case of this theme, with the support and assistance of either their coach or teammates is providing the platform. As the sample group highlighted, this brought about the feeling of togetherness, pulling for one another and developing the team unity experienced by the student-athletes. Moreover, as outlined by the participants under this theme, the notion of a 'community of sport' with other student-athletes, its benefits and its positive impact strongly aligns with the SDT (Ryan and Deci 2000), particularly so with the relatedness domain. The desire of human nature to interact with others, be connected to and experience a feeling of belongingness is clearly evident from all nine participants.

4.9 Subtheme: Motivation for Success

The strong sense of identity, outlined by the nine participants, also positively impacted on their motivation for success. While each student-athlete initially experienced challenges in relation to qualifying for the team and with settling into the American academic system, it is apparent that this experience subsequently provided them with the platform to reach greater heights moving forward. Specifically, as one participant outlined the challenges they experienced trying to make the team and with some classes, reflecting on this during the interview, they stated: *'I had quite a tough time settling in the beginning as I wasn't making the team and was struggling with classes. However, my academic advisor and coach were great and advised I switched programmes of study which I liked. My team mates were also really supportive.'*

From the analysis of the motivation for success, while student-athletes quite often struggle initially, the culture of college sports support of their student-athletes clearly allows them to feel very much part of the team

and thus comfortable with their environment. This is a key component under the domain of competence and relatedness of the SDT by Ryan and Deci (2000). Additionally, the experience of this non-normative transition of not making the team, in turn resulted in positive outcomes moving forward. As one participant reflected:

Looking back on my freshman year, I'm so glad I overcame these challenges. At one point I thought about coming home, however it was such a nice place and the support from the coach and strong feeling of togetherness as a team really kept me going. I'm so much more confident now and didn't miss a tournament after that and I'm even doing well academically now!

4.10 Conclusion Chapter

The closing chapter will cover the key findings of the study. The initial aims of the study will be revisited along with the methodology employed. It will also discuss the limitations associated with the study, along with recommendations for future studies in a similar field.

5 Summary of Research Findings

When young student-athletes embark on the next chapter in their academic and athletic journey in America, there is a profound readjustment across three domains; these being academic, athletic and social (Clift and Mower 2013). In essence, they have to start from scratch and find their way and their place in a foreign location, a new system(s), with a new coach and a new peer group. All they have known is left behind and a new experience awaits. This challenge, transition and readjustment is far from straightforward.

While there are gaps and little empirical research chronicling the journey of British student-athletes embarking on such a journey in America, the findings through analysis of the themes identified fit very well to that of Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) Transition Theory and Ryan & Deci (2000) Self-Determination Theory. Following analysis of the data, all nine participants interviewed discussed feelings and experiences which aligned with the motivational components of competence, relatedness and autonomy which provided them with a platform to tackle both normative and non-normative transitions during their development in America, giving a detailed account of how the US College system has helped them grow as a student, an athlete and an individual.

This study set out to:

1. Give an overview of the US College Golf System
2. Explore and detail the experience of UK student-athletes in America
3. Critically analyse the transitions and change-events encountered and how they were overcome

The findings concluded that international student-athletes on golf scholarships in America can expect:

1. Not to find the transition into US College Golf straightforward initially
2. To experience periods of homesickness initially
3. To experience their biggest challenges academically, athletically and socially during the early weeks/months of adjustment in their Freshman year
4. To overcome significant non-normative transitions and change-events, which result in positive self-development and fulfilment by the end of their freshman year

The findings from this study found that international student-athletes are very well supported in the US college golf system. Further, strong relationships built between coaches and players are of significant importance, especially during the early phases of the freshman year. However, international student-athletes should expect and be prepared to encounter both negative and positive transitions which facilitate their academic, athletic and social development. With reference to the environment that the student-athlete is exposed to in America, the sample group in this study experienced greater feelings of belonging and togetherness congruent to Ryan and Deci (2000) SDT. Further, while new freshman entrants into the system might expect to have a place on the team as a matter of passage, the reality is quite different. Repercussions from not making the team initially can be particularly negative and affect academic performance and motivation in some cases. However, the American college sports system, its coaches and institutions as a whole are very experienced (and resourced) in creating a positive culture of academics and sports and thus support their international student-athletes very well.

Moreover, graduates also demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, time management and team working skills as a result of the student-athlete's demanding academic and athletic schedule (Lally & Kerr 2005). As Ryan & Deci (2000) SDT framework highlights, for growth and integration, as well as for constructive social development and personal well-being, there needs to exist an environment for student-athletes which harbours such positive developmental experiences. The American college golf system is one such environment that allows this to happen.

The perception that the American college golf system can be likened to that of a 'golf holiday' certainly is a myth. While non-revenue making sports such as golf rely heavily on funding from the revenue-making sports of college football and basketball, some of the well-publicised research on the latter in regards to poor graduation rates, academic motivation and drop-out is not reflective of the majority of college sports including golf. Indeed, student-athletes graduate at higher rates than their mainstream counterparts (Franklin 2006).

As detailed in the analysis of the results, it could therefore be concluded that the participants sampled would not have developed greater feelings of self-fulfilment had they not taken the opportunity to compete and study as part of the US Intercollegiate Sports System.

While the natural occurrence of 'bumps in the road' are experienced by all students over the course of a journey, international student-athletes overcome greater challenges and transitions given they are part of a foreign environment which has its own systems and cultures. While Collins et. al (2016) advocates creating situations and environments which destabilise and challenge the athlete, it could be said that over the course of two to four years in America, the number of challenging transitions British student-athletes experience are vast. Not every student-athlete taking up a sports scholarship will have travelled to America prior, therefore the potential for a shock to the system early in their Freshman year is that bit greater. The first time they land, the first

encounter with their coach, their team, their institution and local community all have the potential to make or break the new entrant. However, as the student-athlete progresses from week to week, month to month and year to year, the potential for a negative transition or non-normative change-event impacting them detrimentally reduces over time as they become more fulfilled in their role as a student-athlete.

5.1 Implications for Student-Athletes and Recommendations for Future Research

If the perceptions of the student-athletes sampled are to represent reality, then the findings of this study may have potentially crucial implications for future young up and coming student-athletes, their families and British high school councillors. Understanding a complex system like the US Intercollegiate Sports systems is far from straight forward for those outside of the US. Additionally, while several PGA Professionals around the UK have experience of the US College Golf System, in some cases this will have been decades ago. This study would prove a valuable contemporary resource to help them inform talented young players they are involved with coaching.

While appropriate financial resources are still required to support student-athletes while on a sports scholarships in America (which typically comes from parents/family), the need to have realistic expectations and take on the correct advice is vital in the placement of the student-athlete into the institution which best 'fits' their academic and athletic needs. This study would also act as a resource for American institutions to reflect on themes and data which emerged from international student-athletes chronicling their perceptions and experiences of the American system.

Conducting this study has highlighted several other avenues of further research in the future. There is the opportunity to conduct a study focussing on British student-athletes on golf scholarships in the US who chose to return home early without graduating, and exploring both frameworks in relation to attrition (Aquilina 2013). There is also a lack of research comparing UK based student-athletes to those of US based counterparts in relation to experiences gained both academically and in college sports. Additionally, in terms of the US system developing elite level professional golfers, there is an opportunity to conduct a study that explores their progression onto the professional ranks after the US College system by way of a longitudinal study. This could also be done by sampling Nationally Ranked Golf Programmes and student-athletes in the top 25 institutions athletically. Further research could also be carried out covering the spectrum of NCAA and NJCAA Division 1, 2 and 3 student-athletes.

5.2 Limitations of Research

It should be noted that alongside the results that emerged from the study, there would always be limitations. As a sample size ($n=9$) the number of participants interviewed in the study was relatively small. However, while it was intended to sample twelve student-athletes, the data became saturated after the ninth. Additionally eight out of nine participants came from Scotland, albeit different regions giving a geographic generalisation of the population studied. Four participants used in the study were all under the tutorage of the researcher at one point, therefore potential bias could be considered limiting to this research. To guard against this, ethical protocols were followed ensuring consistency with all nine participants. This was done via informed consent, participant's information sheet and the sharing of the transcription of the interview with the participant who subsequently signed it off. Finally, the researcher is a product of the US College Golf system and therefore researcher bias could be considered limiting to this research. However, according to

Miller et. al (2012), this familiarity together with previously knowing some respondents can also permit greater levels of trust between the researcher and the participant, this in turn increasing the richness of the data.

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7 Appendices

7.1 Student-Athlete Vignettes

Russell: Started playing golf at 7 or 8 years old; he mentioned he was introduced to golf through his father, who would take Russell and his brother to the course. He joined his local golf club in Scotland, which had a vibrant junior section at the time, and recalled how much fun it was along with making new friends. Russell was an active sportsman in football and rugby as well as golf, through to the age of 13. At this point, he knew he wanted to pursue golf more seriously and decided to give up the former sports, primarily due to injury threats and time away from golf. After a successful junior career and by the age of 17, he reached a handicap of 1, had experience of competing for his County Team and in national tournaments around the UK, and started exploring the route to America post high school in Scotland. Russell is now in his third year (Junior Year) at an NCAA Division 2 University in New Mexico. He hopes to continue in the US after graduating either in a playing or employment capacity.

Anthony: In comparison to his peers started golf later in life at the age of thirteen. He joined his local golf club in Scotland at age 14 and quickly started competing in junior competitions. He played football up to the age of 15, however this took a back seat as his passion grew for golf. From the ages of 17 – 19, he represented his County Golf Team, attended a College in Scotland where he studied a sports related course, had reduced his handicap to scratch (zero) and began looking into golf scholarships in America. At 19 years of age, Anthony took up his golf scholarship to a NJCAA Division 2 College in Oklahoma. He has since graduated from College and gained a further golf scholarship to an NCAA Division 2 University. He is currently in his fourth (Senior Year) and final year. He hopes to continue in the US after graduating either in a playing or employment capacity.

Rylan: A Spanish golfer who took up the game aged 9. He enjoyed playing football from a young age and knew he would have a career in sport. As his results in golf quickly gained national recognition at Under 18 level, football took a back seat. By the age of 16, Ryan had a handicap of +2 and represented his Country in International Matches and won many tournaments in Spain. At 17, he travelled from Spain to Scotland to attend College to study a sports related course. After completing a one year qualification, Ryan headed to America on a golf scholarship to an NJCAA Division 1 College in New Mexico, where he had many successes including achieving All-Conference recognition each year he was there. He now plays golf professionally on a mini Tour around Europe, hoping to qualify for the main European Tour in years to come.

David: First started playing at the age of 10 and was a junior member of a club in Scotland by the time he was 11. David played for the County Boys Team from the age of 13 onwards and chose to stop all other sports from age 14. Similarly to the other participants, there was little by way of organised golf in high school where football and rugby dominated their time. After studying at a College in Scotland, David took up a golf scholarship to an NJCAA Division 1 College in Texas at the age of 18. After two years at College, he gained a golf scholarship to an NCAA Division 2 University where he continued his studies and progress in golf. After graduating University in America, he has now returned to Scotland where he is in his final honours year at University and continues to play golf at a high level as an amateur.

Roger: Started golf aged 8 and started competing in 9 hole competitions at 10 years old in Scotland. He achieved his first 18 hole handicap at 12 years old and at the age of 15, he gave up all other sports to focus on golf. Prior to focussing on golf, Roger had played football at a high level for 4 years and considered that as a career pathway, however he felt he was developing quicker and that there were more opportunities in golf. When he turned 16 he played off a handicap of scratch, started looking

into golf scholarships in the US and after his sixth year at high school, took up a scholarship to an NCAA Division 1 University in Alabama. He is currently in his fourth (Senior Year) and hopes to stay on and work in America.

Hannah: Started golf aged 9, joined her local club in Scotland aged 11 when she started competing. Hannah was an active sports person throughout high school where she represented her school playing basketball. At aged 14 she decided to focus on golf and stopped playing basketball. Thereafter, she represented her County Team with successes across junior competitions. She made initial enquiries about America during the early part of her fourth year at high school, hoping to gain a golf scholarship once she finished sixth year. While she achieved at a high academic level, her golf developed as well so this goal became a reality at aged 17. She is now in her third year (Junior Year) at an NCAA Division 1 University in North Carolina and has had some significant successes achieving All-Conference recognition at the end of her second year (Sophomore Year) along with student-athlete academic accolades.

Emma: Is from a golfing family where her younger brother and father both play, and to a very competent level. She joined her local golf club in Scotland aged 12 and by aged 15, she was playing off a handicap of three. An active sports person, Emma played hockey competitively throughout her high school career and did not give that up until she began University in America. The scheduling of hockey training and competition did not conflict with her golf so she enjoyed the balance between both sports. Emma is now in the third year (Junior Year) of a golf scholarship at an NCAA Division 1 University in Florida and is progressing very well.

Kim: Started golf later than most of her peers at aged 14 and was a member of a local golf club by 15. She was a very competitive swimmer throughout primary and high school, which involved prolonged rigorous training. Swimming was very much her favourite sport initially, until she found golf. By aged 16, Kim found more opportunities through golf, lowered her handicap to 2 and decided to peruse a golf scholarship to the US. After completing the final year of high school, Kim attended a College in Scotland for one year studying a sports qualification. Her goal of gaining an opportunity to the US became a reality the following year when she gained a golf scholarship to an NCAA Division 1 University in Arkansas. She has since completed her golf and studies in the US and returned to Scotland where she is continuing her studies in fourth year at University.

Susan: Started playing golf aged 8 and was also a competitive gymnast throughout primary and especially high school. She joined her local golf club in Scotland aged 11 and soon reduced her handicap from 36 to 1 by the time she was 16. She represented her County Team as well as gaining an International Cap, along with many successes at Under 18 level. After sixth year of high school, Susan was very keen to progress her studies and golf in the American College system. She gained a golf scholarship and attended an NJCAA Division 1 College in Texas where she had many successes

7.2 Interview Schedule

1. At what age did you start playing golf? *When did you start competing?* (probe)
2. When did you choose to focus / specialise in golf? *What sacrifices were made to compete?* (probe)
3. When and how did you make the decision to pursue a golf scholarship to the USA? *What did you know about the system initially?* (probe)
4. How did you find out more about the US Collegiate Golf system? *Via which channel - family, friend, coach, company?* (probe)
5. What have been some of the biggest challenges you have faced, being a student-athlete in the USA? *Have there been any points where you regretted going? Cultural / environmental challenges?* (probe)
6. How well do/did you feel supported as a student-athlete, both academically and athletically? *How does/did your commitment to the golf team impact on academics?* (probe)
7. What are some of the biggest differences you have experienced between studying in the US to the UK? *Access to facilities for training and practice? Quality of facilities? Coaching? Training? Competition?* (probe)
8. What are your intentions / expectations after graduating? *Turning professional? Gaining employment in the US? Returning home?* (probe)

7.3 Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

Example

Philosophy

Membership on the (****) College Golf Team is considered a privilege. In order to maintain that membership, student-athletes are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship, honesty, integrity, and respect for others as well as abide by all College policies and legislative laws.

As a member of the squad, you are a representative of (****) and the community and are often the most visible students. The College and the student-athlete both benefit from this exposure and this brings with it a set of privileges and responsibilities.

To this end, the department of golf and sport has adopted a standard of ethical conduct and behavioural expectations for all golf and sport students of (****) College. A balanced student-athlete will be a responsible citizen, who achieves academically and performs practically. Violation of this code of conduct is a significant event and will result in disciplinary action.

Responsible Citizenship

One of the primary purposes of (****) College is to educate students to be responsible and productive citizens of good character. Character is knowing what is right (awareness), committing to what is right (attitude), and doing what is right (behaviour). It means having personal integrity and possessing the will, the courage, the determination, and the persistence to do the right thing despite pressures and temptations to the contrary.

To this end, the department of golf and sport believe that good character is fundamental to academic and golfing excellence. Accordingly, while on sporting related training and tournament travel, student-athletes are expected to:

- Abide by all government laws and college regulations
- Accept personal responsibility to exercise good judgement and self-discipline on and off the golf course
- Honourably represent oneself, one's team, and the college by exhibiting pride in dress and behaviour while playing in and travelling to and from college matches
- Present positive demeanour and etiquette on and off the golf course
- Show respect for all members of the squad as well as other users of the facilities and local community
- Treat people with civility and cooperate with people in authority respectfully
- Be tolerant of local customs

The college is proud of its well-earned reputation as a high quality institution in higher education in golf performance and is resolute in protecting its integrity. Student-athletes will be held accountable for conduct that is detrimental to the department and college.

Academic Responsibilities

In keeping with the vision of the college, the department of golf and sport is committed to supporting every effort that will foster intellectual development and graduation for student-athletes. While several levels of support exist at the college, the ultimate responsibility rests upon the shoulders of the student-athlete. As a result, each student athlete is expected to:

- Set a primary goal of obtaining a qualification
- Seek assistance from instructors and college support services before and/or when academic difficulties occur
- Be a responsible member of each class, which includes attending, being prepared, completing requirements, and participating at the level expected.
- Prioritise catching up with studies where multiple classes have been missed for any reason, meaning participation in qualifying and team events is temporarily halted
- Adhere to the college's policies regarding academic integrity and honesty

Golf Squad Responsibilities

As ambassadors of the college, student-athletes are expected to:

- Behave with dignity, respect and good sportsmanship
- Conduct themselves with honesty and good sportsmanship during games and competition
- Conduct themselves in a manner reflecting positively on themselves and on the reputation of the college, both on and off the golf course, in pre-training and post-game, and when travelling and participating against other squads
- Maintain an attitude of respect towards opponents
- Comply with squad rules as established by the department of golf and sport
- Adhere to the squads curfew as set out by the staff
- Refrain from vulgar language and/or gestures at all times

Golf Squad Expectations

For student athletes who qualify, during the dates of tournament travel, you are under the duty of care of golf staff of (****) College, whilst training and competing at (insert locations). As a student-athlete who represents the college, you will be visible on an international stage. Therefore, I

- Understand that participation is a privilege
- Will adhere to curfew times as set out by staff
- Will abide by the rules in relation to alcohol as set out by staff
- Will act in a positive, respectful manner at all times
- Will train and compete in a manner consistent with the integrity of the game
- Will take responsibility for myself and support my team mates
- Will remain with the team in the evening post training / competition
- Understand that violation of any rules and responsibilities as set out in this code of conduct will result in disciplinary action

Consequences of Breaching Code of Conduct

- Suspension of training / playing / competition privileges
- Suspension of funding for any given day of violation
- Returning home early in the event of violations

Student (Print Name)
(Signature)

Student

Countersignature (staff) _____ Date: _____

7.4 National Letter of Intent: Example

National Junior College Athletic Association 1631 Mesa Ave Suite B, Colorado Springs, CO 80906

NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT AND SCHOLARSHIP AGREEMENT FORM 2011-2012

Signee Information

First Name	Middle Name	Last Name
ID Number	Date of Birth	Gender
Address		High School
City	State	Zip
Sport Golf - w	Holder of Green Card / U.S. Citizen No	Country
School	City	State

Important – Read Carefully

It is important to carefully read this entire document before signing. The original, signed copy of this form is to be returned to the institution. A fully executed copy will be provided to the student-athlete upon its completion.

The terms of the athletic institutional aid to be given during the academic year are to be listed in this section. Please indicate the amount of aid to be provided (full/half/quarter/dollar amount).

Scholarship Info

Tuition, Term - All (Fall, Winter, & Spring) Full
Room, Term - All (Fall, Winter, & Spring)
Board, Term - All (Fall, Winter, & Spring) 2 Meals Per Day
Books, Term - All (Fall, Winter, & Spring) Full

- 1) In signing this letter, I understand that if I enroll at another NJCAA institution, prior to completing the terms of this contract in the above indicated sport at the above college, I may not represent that institution in intercollegiate athletic competition until the terms of this contract have expired, with the following exceptions:
 - a) If I have not, by the opening day of classes in the fall term, met the requirements for admission to the institution named above or academic requirements for financial aid to athletes; or
 - b) If I attend the institution named above for at least one academic year; or
 - c) If I receive a National Letter of Intent Release Agreement, signed by the above institutions chief executive officer and the athletic director; or
 - d) If I serve on active duty with the armed forces of the United States or on an official church mission for at least eighteen (18) calendar months; or
 - e) If my sport is discontinued by the institution with which I signed this letter.
- 2) I MAY SIGN ONLY ONE VALID NJCAA NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT. I understand that if I sign two or more NJCAA Letters of Intent without first receiving a NJCAA release, I will immediately become ineligible to compete in NJCAA competition for the next academic year.
- 3) I understand that all NJCAA institutions are obligated to respect my signing and shall cease to recruit me. I shall notify any recruiter who contacts me of my signing.
- 4) If my parent or legal guardian* and I fail to sign this letter within fourteen (14) days after the date of issuance it will become invalid. In that event, this letter may be reissued.
- 5) This letter must be signed and dated by the Director of Athletics before submission for my signature. I may receive this letter prior to the official signing date.
- 6) This letter must be filed with the NJCAA National Office and the institution with which I sign, within twenty-one (21) days after the student's signature, or it will be invalid. In that event, this letter may be reissued.
- 7) If I have knowledge that I or my parent/legal guardian have falsified any part of this letter, I understand that I forfeit my eligibility within the NJCAA for any further competition.

This letter becomes valid when signed by the student-athlete.

It may only be cancelled for the reasons listed in this letter and for the reasons outlined in Article VIII, Section 1.E.4 of the NJCAA bylaws. I agree to abide by the letter and all other regulations of the National Junior College Athletic Association.

*Parent or legal guardian signature is not required for any athlete who has attained his/her 18th birthday, prior to the date of this signature.

I certify that I have read all the terms and conditions contained in this letter and fully understand, accept and agree to be bound by them. I understand that my participation in a scrimmage may count as a season of eligibility at a four-year college.

Signed:

Student

Parent / Legal Guardian

Coach

Director

President / Designated Rep.

7.5 Ethical Approval

JM/RL/CR/SHS_R_2014-15_25
10th April 2015

Fraser Hutchison



Dear Fraser

But I Have to Make the Team! A biographical Narrative of Intercollegiate Sports (Golf) in the USA. A Developmental Pathway for Student-Athletes

This is to notify you that the Ethics Committee have looked at your submission and you have been granted **full ethical approval** to collect data for your project as entitled above. This is subject to the following standard conditions:

- i You must remain in regular contact with your project supervisor
- ii Your supervisor must see a copy of all experimental materials and your procedure prior to commencing data collection
- iii If you make any substantive changes to your project plan, you must submit a new ethical approval application to the Committee. Application forms and the accompanying explanatory document are on the Intranet. Completed forms should be resubmitted through the Research Ethics Blackboard course.
- iv Any changes to the procedures must be negotiated with your supervisor

Failure to comply with these conditions will result in your ethical approval being revoked by the Ethics Committee.

Should you have any queries please contact your Supervisor.

Yours sincerely

School Ethics Committee

School of Social & Health Sciences

7.6 Participants Information Sheet

Reflections on your experience of being a Student-Athlete in the USA

1. Invitation

You are being invited to take part in this research study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take some time to read the following information sheet carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish. You have been selected because of your unique experiences either as a current student-athlete on a golf scholarship at an academic institution in the USA, or as a past graduate of the same Collegiate Sports system.

2. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to develop an in-depth understanding of your experiences of being a student-athlete, on a golf scholarship, in the US Collegiate Sport system. I am interested in whether your experience is/was what you expected prior to taking up the golf scholarship and the challenges faced both academically and athletically. Much can be learned from studying individual's opinions and your unique experiences and viewpoint can provide an insight into the experience of golf/sport scholarships in the USA.

3. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign an informed consent form to confirm that you understand what is involved when taking part in this study. If you decide to take part, you are free to leave the study at any time and without giving a reason.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to take part in an interview lasting between 30 and 60 minutes. During this interview, you will be encouraged to talk about and discuss your experience of being a student-athlete, on a golf scholarship, in the USA. You are under no obligation to discuss any particular area and may go into as much or as little depth as you wish.

5. What are possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

All procedures have been risk assessed. Data will be anonymous and will be kept secured at all times. If you have a concern about any aspect of the study, you should ask to speak to the researcher who will do his best to answer your question.

6. What happens when the research study stops?

You will be kept informed of the progress of the analysis of your interviews and may be asked to comment on the accuracy of the transcripts and analysis. Results may be published in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific conference. The data will be anonymous and you will not be identified in any report or publication. Should you wish to see the results of the study, or the publication, please let the researcher know and he will arrange to provide you with these.

7. What will happen if I don't want to continue with the study?

You are free to leave the study at any time and without giving a reason.

8. Will my part in this study be kept confidential?

Information will be kept securely by the researcher, in a locked cabinet, and on a password protected computer. This includes all audio recordings of interviews and transcripts.

9. Who is organising and funding this study?

This study is being funded by the researcher and carried out with the University of Abertay Dundee.

10. Contact for further information

You are encouraged to ask any questions you wish. Should you have any queries or concerns at any time, please contact(insert your name and email)

7.7 Informed Consent

American College Golf Study

Informed Consent Form

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and the University of Abertay Dundee has approved all procedures.

- ☐ I have read and understood all information provided, and this consent form
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation
- ☐ I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study
- ☐ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing
- ☐ I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence
- ☐ I agree to participate in this study

Your name: _____

Your signature: _____

Signature of investigator: _____

Date: _____